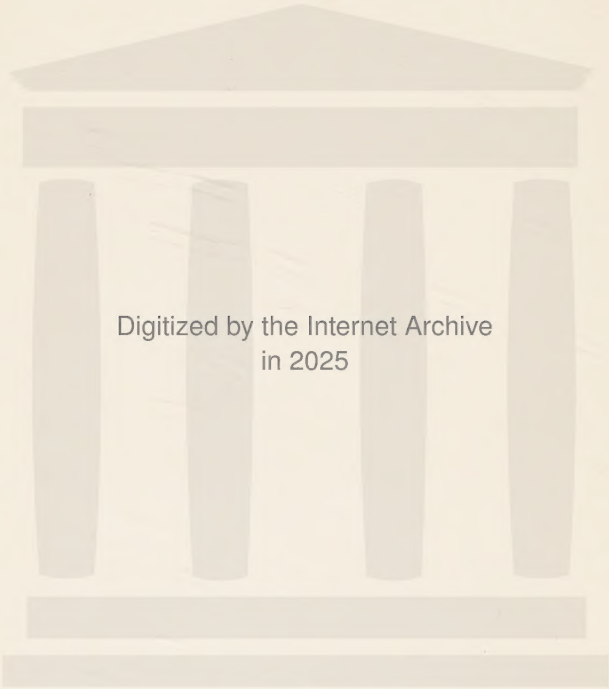
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THE COMPLETE POETICAL WORKS OF WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

V

1806–1815

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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. . . "Our home by Grasmere's quiet Lake."

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"Sweet garden orchard eminently fair,
The loveliest spot that man hath ever found."
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"Brook! whose society the Poet seeks
Intent his wasted spirits to renew."

The Wordsworths were fond of roaming through this valley. They knew every part of it and "looked upon the hills with tenderness." By the side of this brook Wordsworth said he had composed thousands of verses.

POEMS

1806–1815

POEMS

1806–1815

CHARACTER OF THE HAPPY WARRIOR

1806 1807

The course of the great war with the French naturally fixed one's attention upon the military character and, to the honour of our country, there were many illustrious instances of the qualities that constitute its highest excellence. Lord Nelson carried most of the virtues that the trials he was exposed to in his department of the service necessarily call forth and sustain, if they do not produce the contrary vices. But his public life was stained with one great crime, so that, though many passages of these lines were suggested by what was generally known as excellent in his conduct, I have not been able to connect his name with the poem as I could wish, or even to think of him with satisfaction in reference to the idea of what a warrior ought to be. For the sake of such of my friends as may happen to read this note I will add, that many elements of the character here pourtrayed were found in my brother John, who perished by shipwreck as mentioned elsewhere. His messmates used to call him the Philosopher, from which it must be inferred that the qualities and dispositions I allude to had not escaped their notice. He often expressed his regret, after the war had continued some time, that he had not chosen the Naval, instead of the East India Company's service, to which his family connection had led him. He greatly valued moral and religious instruction for youth, as tending to make good sailors. The best, he used to say, came from Scotland; the

next to them, from the North of England, especially from Westmoreland and Cumberland, where, thanks to the piety and local attachments of our ancestors, endowed, or, as they are commonly called, free, schools abound.

Who is the happy Warrior? Who is he
That every man in arms should wish to be?
— It is the generous Spirit, who, when brought
Among the tasks of real life, hath wrought
Upon the plan that pleased his boyish thought:
Whose high endeavours are an inward light
That makes the path before him always bright:
Who, with a natural instinct to discern
What knowledge can perform, is diligent to learn;
Abides by this resolve, and stops not there,
But makes his moral being his prime care;
Who, doomed to go in company with Pain,
And Fear, and Bloodshed, miserable train!
Turns his necessity to glorious gain;
In face of these doth exercise a power
Which is our human nature's highest dower;
Controls them and subdues, transmutes, bereaves
Of their bad influence, and their good receives:
By objects, which might force the soul to abate
Her feeling, rendered more compassionate;
Is placable — because occasions rise
So often that demand such sacrifice;

More skilful in self-knowledge, even more pure,
As tempted more; more able to endure,
As more exposed to suffering and distress;
Thence, also, more alive to tenderness.
— 'T is he whose law is reason; who depends
Upon that law as on the best of friends;
Whence, in a state where men are tempted still
To evil for a guard against worse ill,
And what in quality or act is best
Doth seldom on a right foundation rest,
He labours good on good to fix, and owes
To virtue every triumph that he knows:
— Who, if he rise to station of command,
Rises by open means; and there will stand
On honourable terms, or else retire,
And in himself possess his own desire;
Who comprehends his trust, and to the same
Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim;
And therefore does not stoop, nor lie in wait
For wealth, or honours, or for worldly state;
Whom they must follow; on whose head must fall,
Like showers of manna, if they come at all:
Whose powers shed round him in the common strife,
Or mild concerns of ordinary life,
A constant influence, a peculiar grace;
But who, if he be called upon to face

Some awful moment to which Heaven has joined
Great issues, good or bad for human kind,
Is happy as a Lover; and attired
With sudden brightness, like a Man inspired;
And, through the heat of conflict, keeps the law
In calmness made, and sees what he foresaw;
Or if an unexpected call succeed,
Come when it will, is equal to the need:
— He who, though thus endued as with a sense
And faculty for storm and turbulence,
Is yet a Soul whose master-bias leans
To homefelt pleasures and to gentle scenes;
Sweet images! which, wheresoe'er he be,
Are at his heart; and such fidelity
It is his darling passion to approve;
More brave for this, that he hath much to love: —
'T is, finally, the Man, who, lifted high,
Conspicuous object in a Nation's eye,
Or left unthought-of in obscurity, —
Who, with a toward or untoward lot,
Prosperous or adverse, to his wish or not —
Plays, in the many games of life, that one
Where what he most doth value must be won:
Whom neither shape of danger can dismay,
Nor thought of tender happiness betray;
Who, not content that former worth stand fast,

Looks forward, persevering to the last,
From well to better, daily self-surpast:
Who, whether praise of him must walk the earth
For ever, and to noble deeds give birth,
Or he must fall, to sleep without his fame,
And leave a dead unprofitable name —
Finds comfort in himself and in his cause;
And, while the mortal mist is gathering, draws
His breath in confidence of Heaven's applause:
This is the happy Warrior; this is He
That every Man in arms should wish to be.

THE HORN OF EGREMONT[1] CASTLE

1806 1807

A tradition transferred from the ancient mansion of Hutton John, the seat of the Hudlestons, to Egremont Castle.

Ere the Brothers through the gateway
Issued forth with old and young,
To the Horn Sir Eustace pointed
Which for ages there had hung.
Horn it was which none could sound,
No one upon living ground,
Save He who came as rightful Heir
To Egremont's Domains and Castle fair.

Heirs from times of earliest record
Had the House of Lucie born,
Who of right had held the Lordship
Claimed by proof upon the Horn:
Each at the appointed hour
Tried the Horn, — it owned his power;
He was acknowledged: and the blast,
Which good Sir Eustace sounded, was the last.

With his lance Sir Eustace pointed,
And to Hubert thus said he,

"What I speak this Horn shall witness
For thy better memory.
Hear, then, and neglect me not!
At this time, and on this spot,
The words are uttered from my heart,
As my last earnest prayer ere we depart.

"On good service we are going
Life to risk by sea and land,
In which course if Christ our Saviour
Do my sinful soul demand,
Hither come thou back straightway,
Hubert, if alive that day;
Return, and sound the Horn, that we
May have a living House still left in thee!"

"Fear not," quickly answered Hubert;
"As I am thy Father's son,
What thou askest, noble Brother,
With God's favour shall be done."
So were both right well content:
Forth they from the Castle went,
And at the head of their Array
To Palestine the Brothers took their way.

Side by side they fought (the Lucies
Were a line for valour famed),

And where'er their strokes alighted,
There the Saracens were tamed.
Whence, then, could it come — the thought —
By what evil spirit brought?
Oh! can a brave Man wish to take
His Brother's life, for Lands' and Castle's sake?

"Sir!" the Ruffians said to Hubert,
"Deep he lies in Jordan flood."
Stricken by this ill assurance,
Pale and trembling Hubert stood.
"Take your earnings." — Oh! that I
Could have *seen* my Brother die!
It was a pang that vexed him then;
And oft returned, again, and yet again.

Months passed on, and no Sir Eustace!
Nor of him were tidings heard;
Wherefore, bold as day, the Murderer
Back again to England steered.
To his Castle Hubert sped;
Nothing has he now to dread.
But silent and by stealth he came,
And at an hour which nobody could name.

None could tell if it were night-time,
Night or day, at even or morn;

No one's eye had seen him enter,
No one's ear had heard the Horn.
But bold Hubert lives in glee:
Months and years went smilingly;
With plenty was his table spread;
And bright the Lady is who shares his bed.

Likewise he had sons and daughters;
And, as good men do, he sate
At his board by these surrounded,
Flourishing in fair estate.
And while thus in open day
Once he sate, as old books say,
A blast was uttered from the Horn,
Where by the Castle-gate it hung forlorn.

'T is the breath of good Sir Eustace!
He is come to claim his right:
Ancient castle, woods, and mountains
Hear the challenge with delight.
Hubert! though the blast be blown
He is helpless and alone:
Thou hast a dungeon, speak the word!
And there he may be lodged, and thou be Lord.

Speak! — astounded Hubert cannot;
And, if power to speak he had,

All are daunted, all the household
Smitten to the heart, and sad.
'T is Sir Eustace; if it be
Living man, it must be he!
Thus Hubert thought in his dismay,
And by a postern-gate he slunk away.

Long, and long was he unheard of:
To his Brother then he came,
Made confession, asked forgiveness,
Asked it by a brother's name,
And by all the saints in heaven;
And of Eustace was forgiven:
Then in a convent went to hide
His melancholy head, and there he died.

But Sir Eustace, whom good angels
Had preserved from murderers' hands,
And from Pagan chains had rescued,
Lived with honour on his lands.
Sons he had, saw sons of theirs:
And through ages, heirs of heirs,
A long posterity renowned,
Sounded the Horn which they alone could sound.

A COMPLAINT

1806 1807

Written at Town-end, Grasmere. Suggested by a change in the manner of a friend.

THERE is a change — and I am poor;
Your love hath been, not long ago,
A fountain at my fond heart's door,
Whose only business was to flow;
And flow it did: not taking heed
Of its own bounty, or my need.

What happy moments did I count!
Blest was I then all bliss above!
Now, for that consecrated fount
Of murmuring, sparkling, living love,
What have I? shall I dare to tell?
A comfortless and hidden well.

A well of love — it may be deep —
I trust it is, — and never dry:
What matter? if the waters sleep
In silence and obscurity.
— Such change, and at the very door
Of my fond heart, hath made me poor.

STRAY PLEASURES

1806 1807

"—— Pleasure is spread through the earth
In stray gifts to be claimed by whoever shall find."

Suggested on the Thames by the sight of one of those floating mills that used to be seen there. This I noticed on the Surrey side between Somerset House and Blackfriars Bridge. Charles Lamb was with me at the time; and I thought it remarkable that I should have to point out to *him*, an idolatrous Londoner, a sight so interesting as the happy group dancing on the platform. Mills of this kind used to be, and perhaps still are, not uncommon on the Continent. I noticed several upon the river Saone in the year 1799, particularly near the town of Chalons, where my friend Jones and I halted a day when we crossed France; so far on foot: there we embarked, and floated down to Lyons.

By their floating mill,
That lies dead and still,
Behold yon Prisoners three,
The Miller with two Dames, on the breast of the Thames!
The platform is small, but gives room for them all;
And they're dancing merrily.

From the shore come the notes
To their mill where it floats,

To their house and their mill tethered fast:
To the small wooden isle where, their work to beguile,
They from morning to even take whatever is given; —
And many a blithe day they have past.

In sight of the spires,
All alive with the fires
Of the sun going down to his rest,
In the broad open eye of the solitary sky,
They dance, — there are three, as jocund as free,
While they dance on the calm river's breast.

Man and Maidens wheel,
They themselves make the reel,
And their music's a prey which they seize;
It plays not for them, — what matter? 't is theirs;
And if they had care, it has scattered their cares,
While they dance, crying, "Long as ye please!"

They dance not for me,
Yet mine is their glee!
Thus pleasure is spread through the earth
In stray gifts to be claimed by whoever shall find;
Thus a rich loving-kindness, redundantly kind,
Moves all Nature to gladness and mirth.

The showers of the spring
Rouse the birds, and they sing;
If the wind do but stir for his proper delight,
Each leaf, that and this, his neighbour will kiss;
Each wave, one and t'other, speeds after his brother:
They are happy, for that is their right!

POWER OF MUSIC

1806 1807

Taken from life.

An Orpheus! an Orpheus! yes, Faith may grow bold,
And take to herself all the wonders of old; —
Near the stately Pantheon you'll meet with the same
In the street that from Oxford hath borrowed its name.

His station is there; and he works on the crowd,
He sways them with harmony merry and loud;
He fills with his power all their hearts to the brim —
Was aught ever heard like his fiddle and him?

What an eager assembly! what an empire is this!
The weary have life, and the hungry have bliss;
The mourner is cheered, and the anxious have rest;
And the guilt-burthened soul is no longer opprest.

As the Moon brightens round her the clouds of the
night,
So He, where he stands, is a centre of light;
It gleams on the face, there, of dusky-browed Jack,
And the pale-visaged Baker's, with basket on back.

That errand-bound 'Prentice was passing in haste —
What matter! he's caught — and his time runs to waste;
The Newsman is stopped, though he stops on the fret;
And the half-breathless Lamplighter — he's in the net!

The Porter sits down on the weight which he bore;
The Lass with her barrow wheels hither her store; —
If a thief could be here he might pilfer at ease;
She sees the Musician, 't is all that she sees!

He stands, backed by the wall; — he abates not his din;
His hat gives him vigour, with boons dropping in,
From the old and the young, from the poorest; and there!
The one-pennied Boy has his penny to spare.

O blest are the hearers, and proud be the hand
Of the pleasure it spreads through so thankful a band;
I am glad for him, blind as he is! — all the while
If they speak 't is to praise, and they praise with a smile.

That tall Man, a giant in bulk and in height,
Not an inch of his body is free from delight;
Can he keep himself still, if he would? oh, not he!
The music stirs in him like wind through a tree.

Mark that Cripple who leans on his crutch; like a tower
That long has leaned forward, leans hour after hour! —

That Mother, whose spirit in fetters is bound,
While she dandles the Babe in her arms to the sound.

Now, coaches and chariots! roar on like a stream;
Here are twenty souls happy as souls in a dream:
They are deaf to your murmurs — they care not for you,
Nor what ye are flying, nor what ye pursue!

STAR-GAZERS

1806 1807

Observed by me in Leicester-square, as here described.

What crowd is this? what have we here! we must not
pass it by;
A Telescope upon its frame, and pointed to the sky:
Long is it as a barber's pole, or mast of little boat,
Some little pleasure-skiff, that doth on Thames's water
float.

The Showman chooses well his place, 't is Leicester's
busy Square;
And is as happy in his night, for the heavens are blue
and fair;
Calm, though impatient, is the crowd; each stands
ready with the fee,
And envies him that 's looking; — what an insight must
it be!

Yet, Showman, where can lie the cause? Shall thy Im-
plement have blame,
A boaster, that when he is tried, fails, and is put to
shame?

Or is it good as others are, and be their eyes in fault?
Their eyes, or minds? or, finally, is yon resplendent vault?

Is nothing of that radiant pomp so good as we have here?
Or gives a thing but small delight that never can be dear?
The silver moon with all her vales, and hills of mightiest fame,
Doth she betray us when they're seen? or are they but a name?

Or is it rather that Conceit rapacious is and strong,
And bounty never yields so much but it seems to do her wrong?
Or is it, that when human Souls a journey long have had
And are returned into themselves, they cannot but be sad?

Or must we be constrained to think that these Spectators rude,
Poor in estate, of manners base, men of the multitude,
Have souls which never yet have risen, and therefore prostrate lie?
No, no, this cannot be; — men thirst for power and majesty!

Does, then, a deep and earnest thought the blissful mind employ
Of him who gazes, or has gazed? a grave and steady joy,
That doth reject all show of pride, admits no outward sign,
Because not of this noisy world, but silent and divine!

Whatever be the cause, 't is sure that they who pry and pore
Seem to meet with little gain, seem less happy than before:
One after One they take their turn, nor have I one espied
That doth not slackly go away, as if dissatisfied.

"YES, IT WAS THE MOUNTAIN ECHO"

1806 1807

Written at Town-end, Grasmere. The echo came from Nab-scar, when I was walking on the opposite side of Rydal Mere. I will here mention, for my dear Sister's sake, that, while she was sitting alone one day high up on this part of Loughrigg Fell, she was so affected by the voice of the Cuckoo heard from the crags at some distance that she could not suppress a wish to have a stone inscribed with her name among the rocks from which the sound proceeded. On my return from my walk I recited these verses to Mrs. Wordsworth.

Yes, it was the mountain Echo,
Solitary, clear, profound,
Answering to the shouting Cuckoo,
Giving to her sound for sound!

Unsolicited reply
To a babbling wanderer sent;
Like her ordinary cry,
Like — but oh, how different!

Hears not also mortal Life?
Hear not we, unthinking Creatures!
Slaves of folly, love, or strife —
Voices of two different natures?

Have not *we* too? — yes, we have
Answers, and we know not whence;
Echoes from beyond the grave,
Recognised intelligence!

Such rebounds our inward ear
Catches sometimes from afar —
Listen, ponder, hold them dear;
For of God, — of God they are.

"NUNS FRET NOT AT THEIR CONVENT'S NARROW ROOM"

1806 1807

Nuns fret not at their convent's narrow room;
And hermits are contented with their cells;
And students with their pensive citadels;
Maids at the wheel, the weaver at his loom,
Sit blithe and happy; bees that soar for bloom,
High as the highest Peak of Furness-fells,
Will murmur by the hour in foxglove bells:
In truth the prison, into which we doom
Ourselves, no prison is: and hence for me,
In sundry moods, 't was pastime to be bound
Within the Sonnet's scanty plot of ground;
Pleased if some Souls (for such there needs must be)
Who have felt the weight of too much liberty,
Should find brief solace there, as I have found.

PERSONAL TALK

1806 1807

Written at Town-end, Grasmere. The last line but two stood, at first, better and more characteristically, thus: —

"By my half-kitchen and half-parlour fire."

My Sister and I were in the habit of having the tea-kettle in our little sitting-room; and we toasted the bread ourselves, which reminds me of a little circumstance not unworthy of being set down among these minutiæ. Happening both of us to be engaged a few minutes one morning when we had a young prig of a Scotch lawyer to breakfast with us, my dear Sister, with her usual simplicity, put the toasting-fork with a slice of bread into the hands of this Edinburgh genius. Our little book-case stood on one side of the fire. To prevent loss of time, he took down a book, and fell to reading, to the neglect of the toast, which was burnt to a cinder. Many a time have we laughed at this circumstance, and other cottage simplicities of that day. By the bye, I have a spite at one of this series of Sonnets (I will leave the reader to discover which) as having been the means of nearly putting off for ever our acquaintance with dear Miss Fenwick, who has always stigmatised one line of it as vulgar, and worthy only of having been composed by a country squire.

I

I AM not One who much or oft delight
To season my fireside with personal talk. —
Of friends, who live within an easy walk,
Or neighbours, daily, weekly, in my sight:

And, for my chance-acquaintance, ladies bright,
Sons, mothers, maidens withering on the stalk,
These all wear out of me, like Forms, with chalk
Painted on rich men's floors, for one feast-night.
Better than such discourse doth silence long,
Long, barren silence, square with my desire;
To sit without emotion, hope, or aim,
In the loved presence of my cottage-fire,
And listen to the flapping of the flame,
Or kettle whispering its faint undersong.

II

"Yet life," you say, "is life; we have seen and see,
And with a living pleasure we describe;
And fits of sprightly malice do but bribe
The languid mind into activity.
Sound sense, and love itself, and mirth and glee
Are fostered by the comment and the gibe."
Even be it so; yet still among your tribe,
Our daily world's true Worldlings, rank not me!
Children are blest, and powerful; their world lies
More justly balanced; partly at their feet,
And part far from them: sweetest melodies
Are those that are by distance made more sweet;
Whose mind is but the mind of his own eyes,
He is a Slave; the meanest we can meet!

III

Wings have we, — and as far as we can go,
We may find pleasure: wilderness and wood,
Blank ocean and mere sky, support that mood
Which with the lofty sanctifies the low.
Dreams, books, are each a world; and books, we know,
Are a substantial world, both pure and good:
Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,
Our pastime and our happiness will grow.
There find I personal themes, a plenteous store,
Matter wherein right voluble I am,
To which I listen with a ready ear;
Two shall be named, pre-eminently dear, —
The gentle Lady married to the Moor;
And heavenly Una with her milk-white Lamb.

IV

Nor can I not believe but that hereby
Great gains are mine; for thus I live remote
From evil-speaking; rancour, never sought,
Comes to me not; malignant truth, or lie.
Hence have I genial seasons, hence have I
Smooth passions, smooth discourse, and joyous thought:

And thus from day to day my little boat
Rocks in its harbour, lodging peaceably.
Blessings be with them — and eternal praise,
Who gave us nobler loves, and nobler cares —
The Poets, who on earth have made us heirs
Of truth and pure delight by heavenly lays!
Oh! might my name be numbered among theirs,
Then gladly would I end my mortal days.

ADMONITION

1806 1807

Intended more particularly for the perusal of those who may have happened to be enamoured of some beautiful Place of Retreat, in the Country of the Lakes.

Well may'st thou halt — and gaze with brightening eye!
The lovely Cottage in the guardian nook
Hath stirred thee deeply; with its own dear brook,
Its own small pasture, almost its own sky!
But covet not the Abode; — forbear to sigh,
As many do, repining while they look;
Intruders — who would tear from Nature's book
This precious leaf, with harsh impiety.
Think what the home must be if it were thine,
Even thine, though few thy wants! — Roof, window, door,
The very flowers are sacred to the Poor,
The roses to the porch which they entwine:
Yea, all, that now enchants thee, from the day
On which it should be touched, would melt away.

"BELOVED VALE!" I SAID, "WHEN I SHALL CON"

1806 1807

"Beloved Vale!" I said, "when I shall con
Those many records of my childish years,
Remembrance of myself and of my peers
Will press me down: to think of what is gone
Will be an awful thought, if life have one."
But, when into the Vale I came, no fears
Distressed me; from mine eyes escaped no tears;
Deep thought, or dread remembrance, had I none.
By doubts and thousand petty fancies crost
I stood, of simple shame the blushing Thrall;
So narrow seemed the brooks, the fields so small!
A Juggler's balls old Time about him tossed;
I looked, I stared, I smiled, I laughed; and all
The weight of sadness was in wonder lost.

"HOW SWEET IT IS, WHEN MOTHER FANCY ROCKS"

1806 1807

How sweet it is, when mother Fancy rocks
The wayward brain, to saunter through a wood!
An old place, full of many a lovely brood,
Tall trees, green arbours, and ground-flowers in flocks;
And wild rose tip-toe upon hawthorn stocks,
Like a bold Girl, who plays her agile pranks
At Wakes and Fairs with wandering Mountebanks, —
When she stands cresting the Clown's head, and mocks
The crowd beneath her. Verily I think,
Such place to me is sometimes like a dream
Or map of the whole world: thoughts, link by link,
Enter through ears and eyesight, with such gleam
Of all things, that at last in fear I shrink,
And leap at once from the delicious stream.

"THOSE WORDS WERE UTTERED AS IN PENSIVE MOOD"

1806 1807

"——they are of the sky,
And from our earthly memory fade away."

Those words were uttered as in pensive mood
We turned, departing from that solemn sight:
A contrast and reproach to gross delight,
And life's unspiritual pleasures daily wooed!
But now upon this thought I cannot brood;
It is unstable as a dream of night;
Nor will I praise a cloud, however bright,
Disparaging Man's gifts, and proper food.
Grove, isle, with every shape of sky-built dome,
Though clad in colours beautiful and pure,
Find in the heart of man no natural home:
The immortal Mind craves objects that endure:
These cleave to it; from these it cannot roam,
Nor they from it: their fellowship is secure.

COMPOSED BY THE SIDE OF GRASMERE LAKE

1806 1820

Clouds, lingering yet, extend in solid bars
Through the grey west; and lo! these waters, steeled
By breezeless air to smoothest polish, yield
A vivid repetition of the stars;
Jove, Venus, and the ruddy crest of Mars
Amid his fellows beauteously revealed
At happy distance from earth's groaning field,
Where ruthless mortals wage incessant wars.
Is it a mirror? — or the nether Sphere
Opening to view the abyss in which she feeds
Her own calm fires? — But list! a voice is near;
Great Pan himself low-whispering through the reeds,
"Be thankful, thou; for, if unholy deeds
Ravage the world, tranquillity is here!"

"WITH HOW SAD STEPS, O MOON, THOU CLIMB'ST THE SKY"

1806 1807

"With how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the sky,
How silently, and with how wan a face!"
Where art thou? Thou so often seen on high
Running among the clouds a Wood-nymph's race!
Unhappy Nuns, whose common breath's a sigh
Which they would stifle, move at such a pace!
The northern Wind, to call thee to the chase,
Must blow to-night his bugle horn. Had I
The power of Merlin, Goddess! this should be:
And all the stars, fast as the clouds were riven,
Should sally forth, to keep thee company,
Hurrying and sparkling through the clear blue heaven.
But, Cynthia! should to thee the palm be given,
Queen both for beauty and for majesty.

"THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US; LATE AND SOON"

1806 1807

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
The Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not. — Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

"WITH SHIPS THE SEA WAS SPRINKLED FAR AND NIGH"

1806 1807

With Ships the sea was sprinkled far and nigh,
Like stars in heaven, and joyously it showed;
Some lying fast at anchor in the road,
Some veering up and down, one knew not why.
A goodly Vessel did I then espy
Come like a giant from a haven broad;
And lustily along the bay she strode,
Her tackling rich, and of apparel high.
This Ship was nought to me, nor I to her,
Yet I pursued her with a Lover's look;
This Ship to all the rest did I prefer:
When will she turn, and whither? She will brook
No tarrying; where She comes the winds must stir:
On went She, and due north her journey took.

"WHERE LIES THE LAND TO WHICH YON SHIP MUST GO?"

1806 1807

Where lies the Land to which yon Ship must go?
Fresh as a lark mounting at break of day,
Festively she puts forth in trim array;
Is she for tropic suns, or polar snow?
What boots the inquiry? — Neither friend nor foe
She cares for; let her travel where she may,
She finds familiar names, a beaten way
Ever before her, and a wind to blow.
Yet still I ask, what haven is her mark?
And, almost as it was when ships were rare,
(From time to time, like Pilgrims, here and there
Crossing the waters) doubt, and something dark,
Of the old Sea some reverential fear,
Is with me at thy farewell, joyous Bark!

TO SLEEP

1806 1807

O GENTLE SLEEP! do they belong to thee,
These twinklings of oblivion? Thou dost love
To sit in meekness, like the brooding Dove,
A captive never wishing to be free.
This tiresome night, O Sleep! thou art to me
A Fly, that up and down himself doth shove
Upon a fretful rivulet, now above
Now on the water vexed with mockery.
I have no pain that calls for patience, no;
Hence am I cross and peevish as a child:
Am pleased by fits to have thee for my foe,
Yet ever willing to be reconciled:
O gentle Creature! do not use me so,
But once and deeply let me be beguiled.

TO SLEEP

1806 1807

A FLOCK of sheep that leisurely pass by,
One after one; the sound of rain, and bees
Murmuring; the fall of rivers, winds and seas,
Smooth fields, white sheets of water, and pure sky;
I have thought of all by turns, and yet do lie
Sleepless! and soon the small birds' melodies
Must hear, first uttered from my orchard trees;
And the first cuckoo's melancholy cry.
Even thus last night, and two nights more, I lay,
And could not win thee, Sleep! by any stealth:
So do not let me wear to-night away:
Without Thee what is all the morning's wealth?
Come, blessèd barrier between day and day,
Dear mother of fresh thoughts and joyous health!

TO SLEEP

1806 1807

Fond words have oft been spoken to thee, Sleep!
And thou hast had thy store of tenderest names;
The very sweetest, Fancy culls or frames,
When thankfulness of heart is strong and deep!
Dear Bosom-child we call thee, that dost steep
In rich reward all suffering; Balm that tames
All anguish; Saint that evil thoughts and aims
Takest away, and into souls dost creep,
Like to a breeze from heaven. Shall I alone,
I surely not a man ungently made,
Call thee worst Tyrant by which Flesh is crost?
Perverse, self-willed to own and to disown,
Mere slave of them who never for thee prayed,
Still last to come where thou art wanted most!

TWO TRANSLATIONS FROM MICHAEL ANGELO, AND A TRANSLATION FROM THE LATIN OF THOMAS WARTON

(?) 1882

Night speaks

Grateful is Sleep, my life in stone bound fast;
More grateful still: while wrong and shame shall last,
On me can Time no happier state bestow
Than to be left unconscious of the woe.
Ah then, lest you awaken me, speak low.

Grateful is Sleep, more grateful still to be
Of marble; for while shameless wrong and woe
Prevail, 't is best to neither hear nor see.
Then wake me not, I pray you. Hush, speak low.

Come, gentle Sleep, Death's image tho' thou art,
Come share my couch, nor speedily depart;
How sweet thus living without life to lie,
Thus without death how sweet it is to die.

FROM THE ITALIAN OF MICHAEL ANGELO

1806 1807

Translations from Michael Angelo, done at the request of Mr. Duppa, whose acquaintance I made through Mr. Southey. Mr. Duppa was engaged in writing the life of Michael Angelo, and applied to Mr. Southey and myself to furnish some specimens of his poetic genius.

YES! hope may with my strong desire keep pace,
And I be undeluded, unbetrayed;
For if of our affections none finds grace
In sight of Heaven, then, wherefore hath God made
The world which we inhabit? Better plea
Love cannot have, than that in loving thee
Glory to that eternal Peace is paid,
Who such divinity to thee imparts
As hallows and makes pure all gentle hearts.
His hope is treacherous only whose love dies
With beauty, which is varying every hour;
But, in chaste hearts uninfluenced by the power
Of outward change, there blooms a deathless flower,
That breathes on earth the air of paradise.

FROM THE SAME

1806 1807

No mortal object did these eyes behold
When first they met the placid light of thine,
And my Soul felt her destiny divine,
And hope of endless peace in me grew bold:
Heaven-born, the Soul a heaven-ward course must hold;
Beyond the visible world she soars to seek
(For what delights the sense is false and weak)
Ideal Form, the universal mould.
The wise man, I affirm, can find no rest
In that which perishes: nor will he lend
His heart to aught which doth on time depend.
'T is sense, unbridled will, and not true love,
That kills the soul: love betters what is best,
Even here below, but more in heaven above.

TO THE MEMORY OF RAISLEY CALVERT

1806 1807

This young man, Raisley Calvert, to whom I was so much indebted, died at Penrith, 1795.

CALVERT! it must not be unheard by them
Who may respect my name, that I to thee
Owed many years of early liberty.
This care was thine when sickness did condemn
Thy youth to hopeless wasting, root and stem —
That I, if frugal and severe, might stray
Where'er I liked; and finally array
My temples with the Muse's diadem.
Hence, if in freedom I have loved the truth;
If there be aught of pure, or good, or great,
In my past verse; or shall be, in the lays
Of higher mood, which now I meditate; —
It gladdens me, O worthy, short-lived Youth!
To think how much of this will be thy praise.

"METHOUGHT I SAW THE FOOTSTEPS OF A THRONE"

1806 1807

The latter part of this Sonnet was a great favourite with my sister S. H. When I saw her lying in death, I could not resist the impulse to compose the Sonnet that follows it. [The sonnet referred to is that entitled "November 1836," beginning, "Even so for me a Vision sanctified."]

Methought I saw the footsteps of a throne
Which mists and vapours from mine eyes did shroud —
Nor view of who might sit thereon allowed;
But all the steps and ground about were strown
With sights the ruefullest that flesh and bone
Ever put on; a miserable crowd,
Sick, hale, old, young, who cried before that cloud,
"Thou art our king, O Death! to thee we groan."
Those steps I clomb; the mists before me gave
Smooth way; and I beheld the face of one
Sleeping alone within a mossy cave,
With her face up to heaven; that seemed to have
Pleasing remembrance of a thought foregone;
A lovely Beauty in a summer grave!

LINES

1806 1807

Composed at Grasmere, during a walk one Evening, after a stormy day, the Author having just read in a Newspaper that the dissolution of Mr. Fox was hourly expected.

Loud is the Vale! the Voice is up
With which she speaks when storms are gone,
A mighty unison of streams!
Of all her Voices, One!

Loud is the Vale; — this inland Depth
In peace is roaring like the Sea;
Yon star upon the mountain-top
Is listening quietly.

Sad was I, even to pain deprest,
Importunate and heavy load![2]
The Comforter hath found me here,
Upon this lonely road;

And many thousands now are sad —
Wait the fulfilment of their fear;
For he must die who is their stay,
Their glory disappear.

LINES

A Power is passing from the earth
To breathless Nature's dark abyss;
But when the great and good depart
What is it more than this —

That Man, who is from God sent forth,
Doth yet again to God return? —
Such ebb and flow must ever be,
Then wherefore should we mourn?

NOVEMBER 1806

1806 1807

Another year! — another deadly blow!
Another mighty Empire overthrown!
And We are left, or shall be left, alone;
The last that dare to struggle with the Foe.
'T is well! from this day forward we shall know
That in ourselves our safety must be sought;
That by our own right hands it must be wrought;
That we must stand unpropped, or be laid low.
O dastard whom such foretaste doth not cheer!
We shall exult, if they who rule the land
Be men who hold its many blessings dear,
Wise, upright, valiant; not a servile band,
Who are to judge of danger which they fear,
And honour which they do not understand.[3]

ADDRESS TO A CHILD

DURING A BOISTEROUS WINTER EVENING

BY MY SISTER

1806 1815

Written at Town-end, Grasmere.

WHAT way does the wind come? What way does he go?
He rides over the water, and over the snow,
Through wood, and through vale; and, o'er rocky height
Which the goat cannot climb, takes his sounding flight;
He tosses about in every bare tree,
As, if you look up, you plainly may see;
But how he will come, and whither he goes,
There's never a scholar in England knows.

He will suddenly stop in a cunning nook
And ring a sharp 'larum; — but, if you should look,
There's nothing to see but a cushion of snow
Round as a pillow, and whiter than milk,
And softer than if it were covered with silk.
Sometimes he'll hide in the cave of a rock,
Then whistle as shrill as the buzzard cock;
— Yet seek him, — and what shall you find in the place?
Nothing but silence and empty space;

ADDRESS TO A CHILD

Save, in a corner, a heap of dry leaves,
That he's left, for a bed, to beggars or thieves!
As soon as 't is daylight to-morrow, with me
You shall go to the orchard, and then you will see
That he has been there, and made a great rout,
And cracked the branches, and strewn them about;
Heaven grant that he spare but that one upright twig
That looked up at the sky so proud and big
All last summer, as well you know,
Studded with apples, a beautiful show!
Hark! over the roof he makes a pause,
And growls as if he would fix his claws
Right in the slates, and with a huge rattle
Drive them down, like men in a battle:
— But let him range round; he does us no harm,
We build up the fire, we're snug and warm;
Untouched by his breath see the candle shines bright,
And burns with a clear and steady light;
Books have we to read, — but that half-stifled knell,
Alas! 't is the sound of the eight o'clock bell.
— Come, now we'll to bed! and when we are there
He may work his own will, and what shall we care?
He may knock at the door, — we'll not let him in;
May drive at the windows, — we'll laugh at his din;
Let him seek his own home wherever it be;
Here's a *cozie* warm house for Edward and me.

ODE

INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY FROM RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

1803–6 1807

This was composed during my residence at Town-end, Grasmere. Two years at least passed between the writing of the four first stanzas and the remaining part. To the attentive and competent reader the whole sufficiently explains itself; but there may be no harm in adverting here to particular feelings or *experiences* of my own mind on which the structure of the poem partly rests. Nothing was more difficult for me in childhood than to admit the notion of death as a state applicable to my own being. I have said elsewhere —

> "A simple child,
> That lightly draws its breath,
> And feels its life in every limb,
> What should it know of death!" —

But it was not so much from feelings of animal vivacity that *my* difficulty came as from a sense of the indomitableness of the Spirit within me. I used to brood over the stories of Enoch and Elijah, and almost to persuade myself that, whatever might become of others, I should be translated, in something of the same way, to heaven. With a feeling congenial to this, I was often unable to think of external things as having external existence, and I communed with all that I saw as something not apart from, but inherent in, my own immaterial nature. Many times while going to school have I grasped at a wall or tree to recall myself from this abyss of idealism to the

reality. At that time I was afraid of such processes. In later periods of life I have deplored, as we have all reason to do, a subjugation of an opposite character, and have rejoiced over the remembrances, as is expressed in the lines —

> "Obstinate questionings
> Of sense and outward things,
> Fallings from us, vanishings"; etc.

To that dream-like vividness and splendour which invest objects of sight in childhood, every one, I believe, if he would look back, could bear testimony, and I need not dwell upon it here: but having in the poem regarded it as presumptive evidence of a prior state of existence, I think it right to protest against a conclusion, which has given pain to some good and pious persons, that I meant to inculcate such a belief. It is far too shadowy a notion to be recommended to faith, as more than an element in our instincts of immortality. But let us bear in mind that, though the idea is not advanced in revelation, there is nothing there to contradict it, and the fall of Man presents an analogy in its favour. Accordingly, a pre-existent state has entered into the popular creeds of many nations; and, among all persons acquainted with classic literature, is known as an ingredient in Platonic philosophy. Archimedes said that he could move the world if he had a point whereon to rest his machine. Who has not felt the same aspirations as regards the world of his own mind? Having to wield some of its elements when I was impelled to write this poem on the "Immortality of the Soul," I took hold of the notion of pre-existence as having sufficient foundation in humanity for authorising me to make for my purpose the best use of it I could as a poet.

> "The Child is Father of the Man;
> And I could wish my days to be
> Bound each to each by natural piety."

INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY

I

THERE was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore; —
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

II

The Rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the Rose,
The Moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare,
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair;
The sunshine is a glorious birth;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath past away a glory from the earth.

III

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,
And while the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound,

To me alone there came a thought of grief:
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
And I again am strong:
The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep;
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong;
I hear the Echoes through the mountains throng,
The Winds come to me from the fields of sleep,
And all the earth is gay;
Land and sea
Give themselves up to jollity,
And with the heart of May
Doth every Beast keep holiday; —
Thou Child of Joy,
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy
Shepherd-boy!

IV

Ye blessèd Creatures, I have heard the call
Ye to each other make; I see
The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;
My heart is at your festival,
My head hath its coronal,
The fulness of your bliss, I feel — I feel it all.
Oh evil day! if I were sullen
While Earth herself is adorning,
This sweet May-morning,

And the Children are culling
On every side,
In a thousand valleys far and wide,
Fresh flowers; while the sun shines warm,
And the Babe leaps up on his Mother's arm: —
I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!
— But there's a Tree, of many, one,
A single Field which I have looked upon,
Both of them speak of something that is gone:
The Pansy at my feet
Doth the same tale repeat:
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

V

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy,

But He beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy;
The Youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

VI

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
And, even with something of a Mother's mind,
And no unworthy aim,
The homely Nurse doth all she can
To make her Foster-child, her Inmate Man,
Forget the glories he hath known,
And that imperial palace whence he came.

VII

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses,
A six years' Darling of a pigmy size!
See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,
Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
With light upon him from his father's eyes!
See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,

Some fragment from his dream of human life,
Shaped by himself with newly-learnèd art;
A wedding or a festival,
A mourning or a funeral;
And this hath now his heart,
And unto this he frames his song:
Then will he fit his tongue
To dialogues of business, love, or strife;
But it will not be long
Ere this be thrown aside,
And with new joy and pride
The little Actor cons another part;
Filling from time to time his "humorous stage"
With all the Persons, down to palsied Age,
That Life brings with her in her equipage;
As if his whole vocation
Were endless imitation.

VIII

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
Thy Soul's immensity;
Thou best Philosopher, who yet dost keep
Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
Haunted for ever by the eternal mind,—
Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!

On whom those truths do rest,
Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;
Thou, over whom thy Immortality
Broods like the Day, a Master o'er a Slave,
A Presence which is not to be put by;
Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might
Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?
Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly freight,
And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

IX

O joy! that in our embers
Is something that doth live,
That Nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive!

The thought of our past years in me doth breed
Perpetual benediction: not indeed
For that which is most worthy to be blest —
Delight and liberty, the simple creed
Of Childhood, whether busy or at rest,

With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his
breast: —
Not for these I raise
The song of thanks and praise;
But for those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings;
Blank misgivings of a Creature
Moving about in worlds not realised,
High instincts before which our mortal nature
Did tremble like a guilty Thing surprised:
But for those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
Are yet a master light of all our seeing;
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal Silence: truths that wake,
To perish never;
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour,
Nor Man nor Boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy!
Hence in a season of calm weather
Though inland far we be,

Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the Children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

X

Then sing, ye Birds, sing, sing a joyous song!
And let the young Lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound!
We in thought will join your throng,
Ye that pipe and ye that play,
Ye that through your hearts to-day
Feel the gladness of the May!
What though the radiance which was once so bright
Be now for ever taken from my sight,
Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind;
In the primal sympathy
Which having been must ever be;
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering;
In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

XI

And O, ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and Groves,
Forebode not any severing of our loves!
Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;
I only have relinquished one delight
To live beneath your more habitual sway.
I love the Brooks which down their channels fret,
Even more than when I tripped lightly as they;
The innocent brightness of a new-born Day
Is lovely yet;
The Clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober colouring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality;
Another race hath been, and other palms are won.
Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

A PROPHECY

FEBRUARY 1807

1807 1807

High deeds, O Germans, are to come from you!
Thus in your books the record shall be found,
"A watchword was pronounced, a potent sound —
Arminius! — all the people quaked like dew
Stirred by the breeze; they rose, a Nation, true,
True to herself — the mighty Germany,
She of the Danube and the Northern Sea,
She rose, and off at once the yoke she threw.
All power was given her in the dreadful trance;
Those new-born Kings he withered like a flame."
— Woe to them all! but heaviest woe and shame
To that Bavarian who could first advance
His banner in accursèd league with France,
First open traitor to the German name!

THOUGHT OF A BRITON ON THE SUBJUGATION OF SWITZERLAND

1807 1807

This was composed while pacing to and fro between the Hall of Coleorton, then rebuilding, and the principal Farmhouse of the Estate, in which we lived for nine or ten months. I will here mention that the Song on the Restoration of Lord Clifford, as well as that on the feast of Brougham Castle, were produced on the same ground.

Two Voices are there; one is of the sea,
One of the mountains; each a mighty Voice:
In both from age to age thou didst rejoice,
They were thy chosen music, Liberty!
There came a Tyrant, and with holy glee
Thou fought'st against him; but hast vainly striven:
Thou from thy Alpine holds at length art driven,
Where not a torrent murmurs heard by thee.
Of one deep bliss thine ear hath been bereft:
Then cleave, O cleave to that which still is left;
For, high-souled Maid, what sorrow would it be
That Mountain floods should thunder as before,
And Ocean bellow from his rocky shore,
And neither awful Voice be heard by thee!

TO THOMAS CLARKSON

ON THE FINAL PASSING OF THE BILL FOR THE ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE

1807 1807

Clarkson! it was an obstinate hill to climb:
How toilsome — nay, how dire — it was, by thee
Is known; by none, perhaps, so feelingly:
But thou, who, starting in thy fervent prime,
Didst first lead forth that enterprise sublime,
Hast heard the constant Voice its charge repeat,
Which, out of thy young heart's oracular seat,
First roused thee. — O true yoke-fellow of Time,
Duty's intrepid liegeman, see, the palm
Is won, and by all Nations shall be worn!
The blood-stained Writing is for ever torn;
And thou henceforth wilt have a good man's calm,
A great man's happiness; thy zeal shall find
Repose at length, firm friend of human kind!

THE MOTHER'S RETURN

BY MY SISTER

1807 1815

Written at Town-end, Grasmere.[4]

A MONTH, sweet Little-ones, is past
Since your dear Mother went away,—
And she to-morrow will return;
To-morrow is the happy day.

O blessèd tidings! thought of joy!
The eldest heard with steady glee;
Silent he stood; then laughed amain,—
And shouted, "Mother, come to me."

Louder and louder did he shout,
With witless hope to bring her near;
"Nay, patience! patience, little boy!
Your tender mother cannot hear."

I told of hills, and far-off towns,
And long, long vales to travel through;—
He listens, puzzled, sore perplexed,
But he submits; what can he do?

No strife disturbs his sister's breast;
She wars not with the mystery
Of time and distance, night and day;
The bonds of our humanity.

Her joy is like an instinct, joy
Of kitten, bird, or summer fly;
She dances, runs without an aim,
She chatters in her ecstasy.

Her brother now takes up the note,
And echoes back his sister's glee;
They hug the infant in my arms,
As if to force his sympathy.

Then, settling into fond discourse,
We rested in the garden bower;
While sweetly shone the evening sun
In his departing hour.

We told o'er all that we had done, —
Our rambles by the swift brook's side
Far as the willow-skirted pool,
Where two fair swans together glide.

We talked of change, of winter gone,
Of green leaves on the hawthorn spray,

Of birds that build their nests and sing,
And all "since Mother went away!"

To her these tales they will repeat,
To her our new-born tribes will show,
The goslings green, the ass's colt,
The lambs that in the meadow go.

— But, see, the evening star comes forth!
To bed the children must depart;
A moment's heaviness they feel,
A sadness at the heart:

'T is gone — and in a merry fit
They run upstairs in gamesome race;
I, too, infected by their mood
I could have joined the wanton chase.

Five minutes past — and, O the change!
Asleep upon their beds they lie;
Their busy limbs in perfect rest,
And closed the sparkling eye.

GIPSIES

1807 1807

Composed at Coleorton. I had observed them, as here described, near Castle Donnington, on my way to and from Derby.

Yet are they here the same unbroken knot
Of human Beings, in the selfsame spot!
    Men, women, children, yea the frame
    Of the whole spectacle the same!
Only their fire seems bolder, yielding light,
Now deep and red, the colouring of night;
    That on their Gipsy-faces falls,
    Their bed of straw and blanket-walls.
— Twelve hours, twelve bounteous hours are
    gone, while I
Have been a traveller under open sky,
    Much witnessing of change and cheer,
    Yet as I left I find them here!
The weary Sun betook himself to rest; —
Then issued Vesper from the fulgent west,
    Outshining like a visible God
    The glorious path in which he trod.
And now, ascending, after one dark hour
And one night's diminution of her power,

Behold the mighty Moon! this way
She looks as if at them — but they
Regard not her: — oh better wrong and strife
(By nature transient) than this torpid life;
Life which the very stars reprove
As on their silent tasks they move!
Yet, witness all that stirs in heaven or earth!
In scorn I speak not; — they are what their birth
And breeding suffer them to be;
Wild outcasts of society!

"O NIGHTINGALE! THOU SURELY ART"

1807 1807

Written at Town-end, Grasmere. (*Mrs. W. says in a note* — "At Coleorton.")

O Nightingale! thou surely art
A creature of a "fiery heart": —
These notes of thine — they pierce and pierce;
Tumultuous harmony and fierce!
Thou sing'st as if the God of wine
Had helped thee to a Valentine;
A song in mockery and despite
Of shades, and dews, and silent night;
And steady bliss, and all the loves
Now sleeping in these peaceful groves.

I heard a Stock-dove sing or say
His homely tale, this very day;
His voice was buried among trees,
Yet to be come at by the breeze:
He did not cease; but cooed — and cooed;
And somewhat pensively he wooed:
He sang of love, with quiet blending,
Slow to begin, and never ending;
Of serious faith, and inward glee;
That was the song — the song for me!

TO LADY BEAUMONT

1807 1807

The winter garden of Coleorton, fashioned out of an old quarry under the superintendence and direction of Mrs. Wordsworth and my Sister Dorothy, during the winter and spring we resided there.

LADY! the songs of Spring were in the grove
While I was shaping beds for winter flowers;
While I was planting green unfading bowers,
And shrubs — to hang upon the warm alcove,
And sheltering wall; and still, as Fancy wove
The dream, to Time and Nature's blended powers
I gave this paradise for winter hours,
A labyrinth, Lady! which your feet shall rove.
Yes! when the sun of life more feebly shines,
Becoming thoughts, I trust, of solemn gloom
Or of high gladness you shall hither bring;
And these perennial bowers and murmuring pines
Be gracious as the music and the bloom
And all the mighty ravishment of Spring.

"THOUGH NARROW BE THAT OLD MAN'S CARES"

1807 1807

"—— gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name."

Written at Coleorton. This old man's name was Mitchell. He was, in all his ways and conversation, a great curiosity, both individually and as a representative of past times. His chief employment was keeping watch at night by pacing round the house, at that time building, to keep off depredators. He has often told me gravely of having seen the Seven Whistlers and the Hounds as here described. Among the groves of Coleorton, where I became familiar with the habits and notions of old Mitchell, there was also a labourer of whom, I regret, I had no personal knowledge; for, more than forty years after, when he was become an old man, I learnt that while I was composing verses, which I usually did aloud, he took much pleasure, unknown to me, in following my steps that he might catch the words I uttered; and, what is not a little remarkable, several lines caught in this way kept their place in his memory. My volumes have lately been given to him by my informant, and surely he must have been gratified to meet in print his old acquaintances.

Though narrow be that old Man's cares, and near,
The poor old Man is greater than he seems:
For he hath waking empire, wide as dreams;
An ample sovereignty of eye and ear.
Rich are his walks with supernatural cheer;

The region of his inner spirit teems
With vital sounds and monitory gleams
Of high astonishment and pleasing fear.
He the seven birds hath seen, that never part,
Seen the SEVEN WHISTLERS in their nightly rounds,
And counted them: and oftentimes will start —
For overhead are sweeping GABRIEL'S HOUNDS
Doomed, with their impious Lord, the flying Hart
To chase for ever, on aerial grounds!

SONG AT THE FEAST OF BROUGHAM CASTLE[5]

UPON THE RESTORATION OF LORD CLIFFORD, THE SHEPHERD, TO THE ESTATES AND HONOURS OF HIS ANCESTORS

1807 1807

This poem was composed at Coleorton while I was walking to and fro along the path that led from Sir George Beaumont's Farm-house, where we resided, to the Hall which was building at that time.

High in the breathless Hall the Minstrel sate,
And Emont's murmur mingled with the Song. —
The words of ancient time I thus translate,
A festal strain that hath been silent long: —
"From town to town, from tower to tower,
The red rose is a gladsome flower.
Her thirty years of winter past,
The red rose is revived at last;
She lifts her head for endless spring,
For everlasting blossoming:
Both roses flourish, red and white:
In love and sisterly delight
The two that were at strife are blended,
And all old troubles now are ended. —

Joy! joy to both! but most to her
Who is the flower of Lancaster!
Behold her how She smiles to-day
On this great throng, this bright array!
Fair greeting doth she send to all
From every corner of the hall;
But chiefly from above the board
Where sits in state our rightful Lord,
A Clifford to his own restored!

They came with banner, spear, and shield,
And it was proved in Bosworth-field.
Not long the Avenger was withstood —
Earth helped him with the cry of blood:[6]
St. George was for us, and the might
Of blessèd Angels crowned the right.
Loud voice the Land has uttered forth,
We loudest in the faithful north:
Our fields rejoice, our mountains ring,
Our streams proclaim a welcoming;
Our strong-abodes and castles see
The glory of their loyalty.
How glad is Skipton at this hour —
Though lonely, a deserted Tower;
Knight, squire, and yeoman, page and groom:
We have them at the feast of Brough'm.
How glad Pendragon — though the sleep

Of years be on her! — She shall reap
A taste of this great pleasure, viewing
As in a dream her own renewing.
Rejoiced is Brough, right glad I deem
Beside her little humble stream;
And she that keepeth watch and ward
Her statelier Eden's course to guard;
They both are happy at this hour,
Though each is but a lonely Tower: —
But here is perfect joy and pride
For one fair House by Emont's side,
This day, distinguished without peer
To see her Master and to cheer —
Him, and his Lady-mother dear!
  Oh! it was a time forlorn
When the fatherless was born —
Give her wings that she may fly,
Or she sees her infant die!
Swords that are with slaughter wild
Hunt the Mother and the Child.
Who will take them from the light?
— Yonder is a man in sight —
Yonder is a house — but where?
No, they must not enter there.
To the caves, and to the brooks,
To the clouds of heaven she looks;

She is speechless, but her eyes
Pray in ghostly agonies.
Blissful Mary, Mother mild,
Maid and Mother undefiled,
Save a Mother and her Child!

Now Who is he that bounds with joy
On Carrock's side, a Shepherd-boy?
No thoughts hath he but thoughts that pass
Light as the wind along the grass.
Can this be He who hither came
In secret, like a smothered flame?
O'er whom such thankful tears were shed
For shelter, and a poor man's bread!
God loves the Child; and God hath willed
That those dear words should be fulfilled,
The Lady's words, when forced away,
The last she to her Babe did say:
"My own, my own, thy Fellow-guest
I may not be; but rest thee, rest,
For lowly shepherd's life is best!"

Alas! when evil men are strong
No life is good, no pleasure long.
The Boy must part from Mosedale's groves,
And leave Blencathara's rugged coves,
And quit the flowers that Summer brings
To Glenderamakin's lofty springs;

Must vanish, and his careless cheer
Be turned to heaviness and fear.
— Give Sir Lancelot Threlkeld praise!
Hear it, good man, old in days!
Thou tree of covert and of rest
For this young Bird that is distrest;
Among thy branches safe he lay,
And he was free to sport and play,
When falcons were abroad for prey.
A recreant harp, that sings of fear
And heaviness in Clifford's ear!
I said, when evil men are strong,
No life is good, no pleasure long,
A weak and cowardly untruth!
Our Clifford was a happy Youth,
And thankful through a weary time,
That brought him up to manhood's prime.
— Again he wanders forth at will,
And tends a flock from hill to hill:
His garb is humble; ne'er was seen
Such garb with such a noble mien;
Among the shepherd grooms no mate
Hath he, a Child of strength and state!
Yet lacks not friends for simple glee,
Nor yet for higher sympathy.
To his side the fallow-deer

Came, and rested without fear;
The eagle, lord of land and sea,
Stooped down to pay him fealty;
And both the undying fish[7] that swim
Through Bowscale-tarn did wait on him;
The pair were servants of his eye
In their immortality;
And glancing, gleaming, dark or bright,
Moved to and fro, for his delight.
He knew the rocks which Angels haunt
Upon the mountains visitant;
He hath kenned them taking wing:
And into caves where Faeries sing
He hath entered; and been told
By Voices how men lived of old.
Among the heavens his eye can see
The face of thing that is to be;
And, if that men report him right,
His tongue could whisper words of might.
— Now another day is come,
Fitter hope, and nobler doom;
He hath thrown aside his crook,
And hath buried deep his book;
Armour rusting in his halls
On the blood of Clifford calls;[8] —
"Quell the Scot," exclaims the Lance —

Bear me to the heart of France,
Is the longing of the Shield —
Tell thy name, thou trembling Field;
Field of death, where'er thou be,
Groan thou with our victory!
Happy day, and mighty hour,
When our Shepherd, in his power,
Mailed and horsed, with lance and sword,
To his ancestors restored
Like a re-appearing Star,
Like a glory from afar,
First shall head the flock of war!"

Alas! the impassioned minstrel did not know
How, by Heaven's grace, this Clifford's heart
was framed,
How he, long forced in humble walks to go,
Was softened into feeling, soothed, and tamed.

Love had he found in huts where poor men lie;
His daily teachers had been woods and rills,
The silence that is in the starry sky,
The sleep that is among the lonely hills.

In him the savage virtue of the Race,
Revenge, and all ferocious thoughts were dead:

Nor did he change; but kept in lofty place
The wisdom which adversity had bred.

Glad were the vales, and every cottage hearth;
The Shepherd-lord was honoured more and more;
And, ages after he was laid in earth,
"The good Lord Clifford" was the name he bore.

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE

OR, THE FATE OF THE NORTONS[9]

1807 1815

The earlier half of this Poem was composed at Stockton-upon-Tees, when Mrs. Wordsworth and I were on a visit to her eldest Brother, Mr. Hutchinson, at the close of the year 1807. The country is flat, and the weather was rough. I was accustomed every day to walk to and fro under the shelter of a row of stacks in a field at a small distance from the town, and there poured forth my verses aloud as freely as they would come. Mrs. Wordsworth reminds me that her Brother stood upon the punctilio of not sitting down to dinner till I joined the party; and it frequently happened that I did not make my appearance till too late, so that she was made uncomfortable. I here beg her pardon for this and similar transgressions during the whole course of our wedded life. To my beloved Sister the same apology is due.

When, from the visit just mentioned, we returned to Town-end, Grasmere, I proceeded with the Poem; and it may be worth while to note, as a caution to others who may cast their eye on these memoranda, that the skin having been rubbed off my heel by my wearing too tight a shoe, though I desisted from walking I found that the irritation of the wounded part was kept up, by the act of composition, to a degree that made it necessary to give my constitution a holiday. A rapid cure was the consequence. Poetic excitement, when accompanied by protracted labour in composition, has throughout my life brought on more or less bodily derangement. Nevertheless, I am, at the close of my seventy-third year, in what may be called excellent health;

so that intellectual labour is not necessarily unfavourable to longevity. But perhaps I ought here to add that mine has been generally carried on out of doors.

Let me here say a few words of this Poem in the way of criticism. The subject being taken from feudal times has led to its being compared to some of Walter Scott's poems that belong to the same age and state of society. The comparison is inconsiderate. Sir Walter pursued the customary and very natural course of conducting an action, presenting various turns of fortune, to some outstanding point on which the mind might rest as a termination or catastrophe. The course I attempted to pursue is entirely different. Everything that is attempted by the principal personages in "The White Doe" fails, so far as its object is external and substantial. So far as it is moral and spiritual it succeeds. The Heroine of the Poem knows that her duty is not to interfere with the current of events, either to forward or delay them, but

> "To abide
> The shock, and finally secure
> O'er pain and grief a triumph pure."

This she does in obedience to her brother's injunction, as most suitable to a mind and character that, under previous trials, had been proved to accord with his. She achieves this not without aid from the communication with the inferior Creature, which often leads her thoughts to revolve upon the past with a tender and humanising influence that exalts rather than depresses her. The anticipated beatification, if I may so say, of her mind, and the apotheosis of the companion of her solitude, are the points at which the Poem aims, and constitute its legitimate catastrophe, far too spiritual a one for instant or widely-spread sympathy, but not therefore the less fitted to make a deep and permanent impression upon that class of minds who think and feel more independently,

than the many do, of the surfaces of things and interests transitory because belonging more to the outward and social forms of life than to its internal spirit. How insignificant a thing, for example, does personal prowess appear, compared with the fortitude of patience and heroic martyrdom: in other words, with struggles for the sake of principle, in preference to victory glorified in for its own sake.

ADVERTISEMENT

During the Summer of 1807 I visited, for the first time, the beautiful country that surrounds Bolton Priory, in Yorkshire; and the Poem of "The White Doe," founded upon a Tradition connected with that place, was composed at the close of the same year.

DEDICATION

In trellised shed with clustering roses gay,
And, Mary! oft beside our blazing fire,
When years of wedded life were as a day
Whose current answers to the heart's desire,
Did we together read in Spenser's Lay
How Una, sad of soul — in sad attire,
The gentle Una, of celestial birth,
To seek her Knight went wandering o'er the earth.

Ah, then, Belovèd! pleasing was the smart,
And the tear precious in compassion shed
For Her, who, pierced by sorrow's thrilling dart,
Did meekly bear the pang unmerited;
Meek as that emblem of her lowly heart
The milk-white Lamb which in a line she led, —
And faithful, loyal in her innocence,
Like the brave Lion slain in her defence.

Notes could we hear as of a faery shell
Attuned to words with sacred wisdom fraught;

Free Fancy prized each specious miracle,
And all its finer inspiration caught;
Till in the bosom of our rustic Cell,
We by a lamentable change were taught
That "bliss with mortal Man may not abide":
How nearly joy and sorrow are allied!

For us the stream of fiction ceased to flow,
For us the voice of melody was mute.
— But, as soft gales dissolve the dreary snow,
And give the timid herbage leave to shoot,
Heaven's breathing influence failed not to bestow
A timely promise of unlooked-for fruit,
Fair fruit of pleasure and serene content
From blossoms wild of fancies innocent.

It soothed us — it beguiled us — then, to hear
Once more of troubles wrought by magic spell;
And griefs whose aery motion comes not near
The pangs that tempt the Spirit to rebel:
Then, with mild Una in her sober cheer,
High over hill and low adown the dell
Again we wandered, willing to partake
All that she suffered for her dear Lord's sake.

Then, too, this Song *of mine* once more could please,
Where anguish, strange as dreams of restless sleep,
Is tempered and allayed by sympathies
Aloft ascending, and descending deep,
Even to the inferior Kinds; whom forest-trees
Protect from beating sunbeams, and the sweep
Of the sharp winds; — fair Creatures! — to whom Heaven
A calm and sinless life, with love, hath given.

This tragic Story cheered us; for it speaks
Of female patience winning firm repose;
And, of the recompense that conscience seeks,
A bright, encouraging, example shows;

Needful when o'er wide realms the tempest breaks,
Needful amid life's ordinary woes; —
Hence, not for them unfitted who would bless
A happy hour with holier happiness.

He serves the Muses erringly and ill,
Whose aim is pleasure light and fugitive:
Oh, that my mind were equal to fulfil
The comprehensive mandate which they give —
Vain aspiration of an earnest will!
Yet in this moral Strain a power may live,
Belovèd Wife! such solace to impart
As it hath yielded to thy tender heart.

RYDAL MOUNT, WESTMORELAND,
April 20, 1815.

"Action is transitory — [10] a step, a blow,
The motion of a muscle — this way or that —
'T is done; and in the after-vacancy
We wonder at ourselves like men betrayed:
Suffering is permanent, obscure and dark,
And has the nature of infinity.
Yet through that darkness (infinite though it seem
And irremoveable) gracious openings lie,
By which the soul — with patient steps of thought
Now toiling, wafted now on wings of prayer —
May pass in hope, and, though from mortal bonds
Yet undelivered, rise with sure ascent
Even to the fountain-head of peace divine."

"They that deny a God, destroy Man's nobility: for certainly Man is of kinn to the Beast by his Body; and if he be not of kinn to God by his Spirit, he is a base, ignoble Creature. It destroys likewise Magnanimity, and the raising of humane Nature: for take an example of a Dogg, and mark what a generosity and courage he will put on, when he finds himself

maintained by a Man, who to him is instead of a God, or Melior Natura. Which courage is manifestly such, as that Creature without that confidence of a better Nature than his own could never attain. So Man, when he resteth and assureth himself upon Divine protection and favour, gathereth a force and faith which human Nature in itself could not obtain."

LORD BACON.

CANTO FIRST

From Bolton's old monastic tower[11]
The bells ring loud with gladsome power;
The sun shines bright; the fields are gay
With people in their best array
Of stole and doublet, hood and scarf,
Along the banks of crystal Wharf,
Through the Vale retired and lowly,
Trooping to that summons holy.
And, up among the moorlands, see
What sprinklings of blithe company!
Of lasses and of shepherd grooms,
That down the steep hills force their way,
Like cattle through the budded brooms;
Path, or no path, what care they?
And thus in joyous mood they hie
To Bolton's mouldering Priory.
What would they there? — Full fifty years
That sumptuous Pile, with all its peers,
Too harshly hath been doomed to taste
The bitterness of wrong and waste:
Its courts are ravaged; but the tower
Is standing with a voice of power,
That ancient voice which wont to call
To mass or some high festival;

And in the shattered fabric's heart
Remaineth one protected part;
A Chapel,[12] like a wild-bird's nest,
Closely embowered and trimly drest;
And thither young and old repair,
This Sabbath-day, for praise and prayer.
  Fast the churchyard fills; — anon
Look again, and they all are gone;
The cluster round the porch, and the folk
Who sate in the shade of the Prior's Oak![13]
And scarcely have they disappeared
Ere the prelusive hymn is heard: —
With one consent the people rejoice,
Filling the church with a lofty voice!
They sing a service which they feel:
For 't is the sunrise now of zeal;
Of a pure faith the vernal prime —
In great Eliza's golden time.
  A moment ends the fervent din,
And all is hushed, without and within;
For though the priest, more tranquilly,
Recites the holy liturgy,
The only voice which you can hear
Is the river murmuring near.
— When soft! — the dusky trees between,
And down the path through the open green,

Where is no living thing to be seen;
And through yon gateway, where is found,
Beneath the arch with ivy bound,
Free entrance to the churchyard ground —
Comes gliding in with lovely gleam,
Comes gliding in serene and slow,
Soft and silent as a dream,
A solitary Doe!
White she is as lily of June,
And beauteous as the silver moon
When out of sight the clouds are driven
And she is left alone in heaven;
Or like a ship some gentle day
In sunshine sailing far away,
A glittering ship, that hath the plain
Of ocean for her own domain.
  Lie silent in your graves, ye dead!
Lie quiet in your churchyard bed!
Ye living, tend your holy cares;
Ye multitude, pursue your prayers;
And blame not me if my heart and sight
Are occupied with one delight!
'T is a work for sabbath hours
If I with this bright Creature go:
Whether she be of forest bowers,
From the bowers of earth below;

Or a Spirit for one day given,
A pledge of grace from purest heaven.
  What harmonious pensive changes
Wait upon her as she ranges
Round and through this Pile of state
Overthrown and desolate!
Now a step or two her way
Leads through space of open day,
Where the enamoured sunny light
Brightens her that was so bright;
Now doth a delicate shadow fall,
Falls upon her like a breath,
From some lofty arch or wall,
As she passes underneath:
Now some gloomy nook partakes
Of the glory that she makes, —
High-ribbed vault of stone, or cell,
With perfect cunning framed as well
Of stone, and ivy, and the spread
Of the elder's bushy head;
Some jealous and forbidding cell,
That doth the living stars repel,
And where no flower hath leave to dwell.
  The presence of this wandering Doe
Fills many a damp obscure recess
With lustre of a saintly show;

And, reappearing, she no less
Sheds on the flowers that round her blow
A more than sunny liveliness.
But say, among these holy places,
Which thus assiduously she paces,
Comes she with a votary's task,
Rite to perform, or boon to ask?
Fair Pilgrim! harbours she a sense
Of sorrow, or of reverence?
Can she be grieved for quire or shrine,
Crushed as if by wrath divine?
For what survives of house where God
Was worshipped, or where Man abode;
For old magnificence undone;
Or for the gentler work begun
By Nature, softening and concealing,
And busy with a hand of healing?
Mourns she for lordly chamber's hearth
That to the sapling ash gives birth;
For dormitory's length laid bare
Where the wild rose blossoms fair;
Or altar, whence the cross was rent,
Now rich with mossy ornament?
— She sees a warrior carved in stone,
Among the thick weeds, stretched alone;
A warrior, with his shield of pride

Cleaving humbly to his side,
And hands in resignation prest,
Palm to palm, on his tranquil breast;
As little she regards the sight
As a common creature might:
If she be doomed to inward care,
Or service, it must lie elsewhere.
— But hers are eyes serenely bright,
And on she moves — with pace how light!
Nor spares to stoop her head, and taste
The dewy turf with flowers bestrown;
And thus she fares, until at last
Beside the ridge of a grassy grave
In quietness she lays her down;
Gentle as a weary wave
Sinks, when the summer breeze hath died
Against an anchored vessel's side;
Even so, without distress, doth she
Lie down in peace, and lovingly.
The day is placid in its going,
To a lingering motion bound,
Like the crystal stream now flowing
With its softest summer sound:
So the balmy minutes pass,
While this radiant Creature lies
Couched upon the dewy grass,

Pensively with downcast eyes.
— But now again the people raise
With awful cheer a voice of praise;
It is the last, the parting song;
And from the temple forth they throng,
And quickly spread themselves abroad,
While each pursues his several road.
But some — a variegated band
Of middle-aged, and old, and young,
And little children by the hand
Upon their leading mothers hung —
With mute obeisance gladly paid
Turn towards the spot, where, full in view,
The white Doe, to her service true,
Her sabbath couch has made.
It was a solitary mound;
Which two spears' length of level ground
Did from all other graves divide:
As if in some respect of pride;
Or melancholy's sickly mood,
Still shy of human neighbourhood;
Or guilt, that humbly would express
A penitential loneliness.
"Look, there she is, my Child! draw near;
She fears not, wherefore should we fear?
She means no harm"; — but still the Boy,

To whom the words were softly said,
Hung back, and smiled, and blushed for joy,
A shame-faced blush of glowing red!
Again the Mother whispered low,
"Now you have seen the famous Doe;
From Rylstone she hath found her way
Over the hills this sabbath day;
Her work, whate'er it be, is done,
And she will depart when we are gone;
Thus doth she keep, from year to year,
Her sabbath mourning, foul or fair."
Bright was the Creature, as in dreams
The Boy had seen her, yea, more bright;
But is she truly what she seems?
He asks with insecure delight,
Asks of himself, and doubts, — and still
The doubt returns against his will:
Though he, and all the standers-by,
Could tell a tragic history
Of facts divulged, wherein appear
Substantial motive, reason clear,
Why thus the milk-white Doe is found
Couchant beside that lonely mound;
And why she duly loves to pace
The circuit of this hallowed place.
Nor to the Child's inquiring mind

Is such perplexity confined:
For, spite of sober Truth that sees
A world of fixed remembrances
Which to this mystery belong,
If, undeceived, my skill can trace
The characters of every face,
There lack not strange delusion here,
Conjecture vague, and idle fear,
And superstitious fancies strong,
Which do the gentle Creature wrong.
That bearded, staff-supported Sire —
Who in his boyhood often fed
Full cheerily on convent-bread
And heard old tales by the convent-fire,
And to his grave will go with scars,
Relics of long and distant wars —
That Old Man, studious to expound
The spectacle, is mounting high
To days of dim antiquity;
When Lady Aäliza mourned [14]
Her Son, and felt in her despair
The pang of unavailing prayer;
Her Son in Wharf's abysses drowned,
The noble Boy of Egremound.
From which affliction — when the grace
Of God had in her heart found place —

A pious structure, fair to see,
Rose up, this stately Priory!
The Lady's work; — but now laid low;
To the grief of her soul that doth come and go,
In the beautiful form of this innocent Doe:
Which, though seemingly doomed in its breast to sustain
A softened remembrance of sorrow and pain,
Is spotless, and holy, and gentle, and bright;
And glides o'er the earth like an angel of light.
Pass, pass who will, yon chantry door;
And, through the chink in the fractured floor
Look down, and see a griesly sight;
A vault where the bodies are buried upright!
There, face by face, and hand by hand,
The Claphams and Mauleverers stand;
And, in his place, among son and sire,
Is John de Clapham, that fierce Esquire,
A valiant man, and a name of dread
In the ruthless wars of the White and Red;
Who dragged Earl Pembroke from Banbury church
And smote off his head on the stones of the porch!
Look down among them, if you dare;
Oft does the White Doe loiter there,

Prying into the darksome rent;
Nor can it be with good intent:
So thinks that Dame of haughty air,
Who hath a Page her book to hold,
And wears a frontlet edged with gold.
Harsh thoughts with her high mood agree —
Who counts among her ancestry
Earl Pembroke, slain so impiously!
That slender Youth, a scholar pale,
From Oxford come to his native vale,
He also hath his own conceit:
It is, thinks he, the gracious Fairy,
Who loved the Shepherd-lord to meet [16]
In his wanderings solitary:
Wild notes she in his hearing sang,
A song of Nature's hidden powers;
That whistled like the wind, and rang
Among the rocks and holly bowers.
'T was said that She all shapes could wear;
And oftentimes before him stood,
Amid the trees of some thick wood,
In semblance of a lady fair;
And taught him signs, and showed him sights,
In Craven's dens, on Cumbrian heights;
When under cloud of fear he lay,
A shepherd clad in homely grey;

Nor left him at his later day.
And hence, when he, with spear and shield,
Rode full of years to Flodden-field,
His eye could see the hidden spring,
And how the current was to flow;
The fatal end of Scotland's King,
And all that hopeless overthrow.
But not in wars did he delight,
This Clifford wished for worthier might;
Nor in broad pomp, or courtly state;
Him his own thoughts did elevate, —
Most happy in the shy recess
Of Barden's lowly quietness.
And choice of studious friends had he
Of Bolton's dear fraternity;
Who, standing on this old church tower,
In many a calm propitious hour,
Perused, with him, the starry sky;
Or, in their cells, with him did pry
For other lore, — by keen desire
Urged to close toil with chemic fire;
In quest belike of transmutations
Rich as the mine's most bright creations.
But they and their good works are fled,
And all is now disquieted —
And peace is none, for living or dead!

Ah, pensive Scholar, think not so,
But look again at the radiant Doe!
What quiet watch she seems to keep,
Alone, beside that grassy heap!
Why mention other thoughts unmeet
For vision so composed and sweet?
While stand the people in a ring,
Gazing, doubting, questioning;
Yea, many overcome in spite
Of recollections clear and bright;
Which yet do unto some impart
An undisturbed repose of heart.
And all the assembly own a law
Of orderly respect and awe;
But see — they vanish one by one,
And last, the Doe herself is gone.

Harp! we have been full long beguiled
By vague thoughts, lured by fancies wild;
To which, with no reluctant strings,
Thou hast attuned thy murmurings;
And now before this Pile we stand
In solitude, and utter peace:
But, Harp! thy murmurs may not cease —
A Spirit, with his angelic wings,
In soft and breeze-like visitings,

Has touched thee — and a Spirit's hand:
A voice is with us — a command
To chant, in strains of heavenly glory,
A tale of tears, a mortal story!

CANTO SECOND

The Harp in lowliness obeyed;
And first we sang of the greenwood shade
And a solitary Maid;
Beginning, where the song must end,
With her, and with her sylvan Friend;
The Friend who stood before her sight,
Her only unextinguished light;
Her last companion in a dearth
Of love, upon a hopeless earth.

For She it was — this Maid, who wrought
Meekly, with foreboding thought,
In vermeil colours and in gold
An unblest work; which, standing by,
Her Father did with joy behold, —
Exulting in its imagery;
A Banner, fashioned to fulfil
Too perfectly his headstrong will:
For on this Banner had her hand
Embroidered (such her Sire's command)
The sacred Cross; and figured there
The five dear wounds our Lord did bear;
Full soon to be uplifted high,
And float in rueful company!

It was the time when England's Queen

Twelve years had reigned, a Sovereign dread;
Nor yet the restless crown had been
Disturbed upon her virgin head;
But now the inly-working North
Was ripe to send its thousands forth,
A potent vassalage, to fight
In Percy's and in Neville's right,
Two Earls fast leagued in discontent,
Who gave their wishes open vent;
And boldly urged a general plea,
The rites of ancient piety
To be triumphantly restored,
By the stern justice of the sword!
And that same Banner, on whose breast
The blameless Lady had exprest
Memorials chosen to give life
And sunshine to a dangerous strife;
That Banner, waiting for the Call,
Stood quietly in Rylstone-hall.

It came; and Francis Norton said,
"O Father! rise not in this fray —
The hairs are white upon your head;
Dear Father, hear me when I say
It is for you too late a day!
Bethink you of your own good name:
A just and gracious Queen have we,

A pure religion, and the claim
Of peace on our humanity. —
'T is meet that I endure your scorn;
I am your son, your eldest born;
But not for lordship or for land,
My Father, do I clasp your knees;
The Banner touch not, stay your hand,
This multitude of men disband,
And live at home in blameless ease;
For these my brethren's sake, for me;
And, most of all, for Emily!"
Tumultuous noises filled the hall;
And scarcely could the Father hear
That name — pronounced with a dying fall —
The name of his only Daughter dear,
As on the Banner which stood near
He glanced a look of holy pride,
And his moist eyes were glorified;
Then did he seize the staff, and say:
"Thou, Richard, bear'st thy father's name,
Keep thou this ensign till the day
When I of thee require the same:
Thy place be on my better hand; —
And seven as true as thou, I see,
Will cleave to this good cause and me."
He spake, and eight brave sons straightway

All followed him, a gallant band!
Thus, with his sons, when forth he came
The sight was hailed with loud acclaim
And din of arms and minstrelsy,
From all his warlike tenantry,
All horsed and harnessed with him to ride, —
A voice to which the hills replied!
But Francis, in the vacant hall,
Stood silent under dreary weight, —
A phantasm, in which roof and wall
Shook, tottered, swam before his sight;
A phantasm like a dream of night!
Thus overwhelmed, and desolate,
He found his way to a postern-gate;
And, when he waked, his languid eye
Was on the calm and silent sky;
With air about him breathing sweet,
And earth's green grass beneath his feet;
Nor did he fail ere long to hear
A sound of military cheer,
Faint — but it reached that sheltered spot;
He heard, and it disturbed him not.
There stood he, leaning on a lance
Which he had grasped unknowingly,
Had blindly grasped in that strong trance,
That dimness of heart-agony;

There stood he, cleansed from the despair
And sorrow of his fruitless prayer.
The past he calmly hath reviewed:
But where will be the fortitude
Of this brave man, when he shall see
That Form beneath the spreading tree,
And know that it is Emily?
He saw her where in open view
She sate beneath the spreading yew —
Her head upon her lap, concealing
In solitude her bitter feeling:
"Might ever son *command* a sire,
The act were justified to-day."
This to himself — and to the Maid,
Whom now he had approached, he said —
"Gone are they, — they have their desire;
And I with thee one hour will stay,
To give thee comfort if I may."
She heard, but looked not up, nor spake;
And sorrow moved him to partake
Her silence; then his thoughts turned round,
And fervent words a passage found.
"Gone are they, bravely, though misled;
With a dear Father at their head!
The Sons obey a natural lord;
The Father had given solemn word

To noble Percy; and a force
Still stronger, bends him to his course.
This said, our tears to-day may fall
As at an innocent funeral.
In deep and awful channel runs
This sympathy of Sire and Sons;
Untried our Brothers have been loved
With heart by simple nature moved;
And now their faithfulness is proved:
For faithful we must call them, bearing
That soul of conscientious daring.
— There were they all in circle — there
Stood Richard, Ambrose, Christopher,
John with a sword that will not fail,
And Marmaduke in fearless mail,
And those bright Twins were side by side;
And there, by fresh hopes beautified,
Stood He, whose arm yet lacks the power
Of man, our youngest, fairest flower!
I, by the right of eldest born,
And in a second father's place,
Presumed to grapple with their scorn,
And meet their pity face to face;
Yea, trusting in God's holy aid,
I to my Father knelt and prayed;
And one, the pensive Marmaduke,

Methought, was yielding inwardly,
And would have laid his purpose by,
But for a glance of his Father's eye,
Which I myself could scarcely brook.
"Then be we, each and all, forgiven!
Thou, chiefly thou, my Sister dear,
Whose pangs are registered in heaven —
The stifled sigh, the hidden tear,
And smiles, that dared to take their place,
Meek filial smiles, upon thy face,
As that unhallowed Banner grew
Beneath a loving old Man's view.
Thy part is done — thy painful part;
Be thou then satisfied in heart!
A further, though far easier, task
Than thine hath been, my duties ask;
With theirs my efforts cannot blend,
I cannot for such cause contend;
Their aims I utterly forswear;
But I in body will be there.
Unarmed and naked will I go,
Be at their side, come weal or woe:
On kind occasions I may wait,
See, hear, obstruct, or mitigate.
Bare breast I take and an empty hand." [17]
Therewith he threw away the lance,

Which he had grasped in that strong trance,
Spurned it, like something that would stand
Between him and the pure intent
Of love on which his soul was bent.
"For thee, for thee, is left the sense
Of trial past without offence
To God or man; such innocence,
Such consolation, and the excess
Of an unmerited distress;
In that thy very strength must lie.
— O Sister, I could prophesy!
The time is come that rings the knell
Of all we loved, and loved so well:
Hope nothing, if I thus may speak
To thee, a woman, and thence weak:
Hope nothing, I repeat; for we
Are doomed to perish utterly:
'T is meet that thou with me divide
The thought while I am by thy side,
Acknowledging a grace in this,
A comfort in the dark abyss.
But look not for me when I am gone,
And be no farther wrought upon:
Farewell all wishes, all debate,
All prayers for this cause, or for that!
Weep, if that aid thee; but depend

Upon no help of outward friend;
Espouse thy doom at once, and cleave
To fortitude without reprieve.
For we must fall, both we and ours —
This Mansion and these pleasant bowers,
Walks, pools, and arbours, homestead, hall —
Our fate is theirs, will reach them all;
The young horse must forsake his manger,
And learn to glory in a Stranger;
The hawk forget his perch; the hound
Be parted from his ancient ground:
The blast will sweep us all away —
One desolation, one decay!
And even this Creature!" which words saying,
He pointed to a lovely Doe,
A few steps distant, feeding, straying;
Fair creature, and more white than snow!
"Even she will to her peaceful woods
Return, and to her murmuring floods,
And be in heart and soul the same
She was before she hither came;
Ere she had learned to love us all,
Herself beloved in Rylstone-hall.
— But thou, my Sister, doomed to be
The last leaf on a blasted tree;
If not in vain we breathed the breath

Together of a purer faith;
If hand in hand we have been led,
And thou, (O happy thought this day!)
Not seldom foremost in the way;
If on one thought our minds have fed,
And we have in one meaning read;
If, when at home our private weal
Hath suffered from the shock of zeal,
Together we have learned to prize
Forbearance and self-sacrifice;
If we like combatants have fared,
And for this issue been prepared;
If thou art beautiful, and youth
And thought endue thee with all truth —
Be strong; — be worthy of the grace
Of God, and fill thy destined place:
A Soul, by force of sorrows high,
Uplifted to the purest sky
Of undisturbed humanity!"
He ended, — or she heard no more;
He led her from the yew-tree shade,
And at the mansion's silent door,
He kissed the consecrated Maid;
And down the valley then pursued,
Alone, the armèd Multitude.

CANTO THIRD

Now joy for you who from the towers
Of Brancepeth[18] look in doubt and fear,
Telling melancholy hours!
Proclaim it, let your Masters hear
That Norton with his band is near!
The watchmen from their station high
Pronounced the word, — and the Earls descry,
Well-pleased, the armèd Company
Marching down the banks of Were.
Said fearless Norton to the pair
Gone forth to greet him on the plain —
"This meeting, noble Lords! looks fair,
I bring with me a goodly train;
Their hearts are with you: hill and dale
Have helped us: Ure we crossed, and Swale,
And horse and harness followed — see
The best part of their Yeomanry!
— Stand forth, my Sons! — these eight are mine,
Whom to this service I commend;
Which way soe'er our fate incline,
These will be faithful to the end;
They are my all" — voice failed him here —
"My all save one, a Daughter dear!
Whom I have left, Love's mildest birth,

The meekest Child on this blessed earth.
I had — but these are by my side,
These Eight, and this is a day of pride!
The time is ripe. With festive din
Lo! how the people are flocking in, —
Like hungry fowl to the feeder's hand
When snow lies heavy upon the land."
He spake bare truth; for far and near
From every side came noisy swarms
Of Peasants in their homely gear;
And, mixed with these, to Brancepeth came
Grave Gentry of estate and name,
And Captains known for worth in arms
And prayed the Earls in self-defence
To rise, and prove their innocence. —
"Rise, noble Earls, put forth your might
For holy Church, and the People's right!"
The Norton fixed, at this demand,
His eye upon Northumberland,
And said: "The Minds of Men will own
No loyal rest while England's Crown
Remains without an Heir, the bait
Of strife and factions desperate;
Who, paying deadly hate in kind
Through all things else, in this can find
A mutual hope, a common mind;

And plot, and pant to overwhelm
All ancient honour in the realm.
— Brave Earls! to whose heroic veins
Our noblest blood is given in trust,
To you a suffering State complains,
And ye must raise her from the dust.
With wishes of still bolder scope
On you we look, with dearest hope;
Even for our Altars — for the prize,
In Heaven, of life that never dies;
For the old and holy Church we mourn,
And must in joy to her return.
Behold!" — and from his Son whose stand
Was on his right, from that guardian hand
He took the Banner, and unfurled
The precious folds — "behold," said he,
"The ransom of a sinful world;
Let this your preservation be;
The wounds of hands and feet and side,
And the sacred Cross on which Jesus died.
— This bring I from an ancient hearth,
These Records wrought in pledge of love
By hands of no ignoble birth,
A Maid o'er whom the blessèd Dove
Vouchsafed in gentleness to brood
While she the holy work pursued."

"Uplift the Standard!" was the cry
From all the listeners that stood round,
"Plant it, — by this we live or die."
The Norton ceased not for that sound,
But said: "The prayer which ye have heard,
Much-injured Earls! by these preferred,
Is offered to the Saints, the sigh
Of tens of thousands, secretly."
"Uplift it!" cried once more the Band,
And then a thoughtful pause ensued:
"Uplift it!" said Northumberland —
Whereat, from all the multitude
Who saw the Banner reared on high
In all its dread emblazonry,
A voice of uttermost joy brake out:
The transport was rolled down the river of Were,
And Durham, the time-honoured Durham, did hear,
And the towers of Saint Cuthbert were stirred by the shout!
Now was the North in arms: — they shine
In warlike trim from Tweed to Tyne,
At Percy's voice: and Neville sees
His Followers gathering in from Tees,
From Were, and all the little rills
Concealed among the forkèd hills —
Seven hundred Knights, Retainers all

Of Neville, at their Master's call
Had sate together in Raby Hall!
Such strength that Earldom held of yore;
Nor wanted at this time rich store
Of well-appointed chivalry.
— Not loth the sleepy lance to wield,
And greet the old paternal shield,
They heard the summons; — and, furthermore,
Horsemen and Foot of each degree,
Unbound by pledge of fealty,
Appeared, with free and open hate
Of novelties in Church and State;
Knight, burgher, yeoman, and esquire;
And Romish priest, in priest's attire.
And thus, in arms, a zealous Band
Proceeding under joint command,
To Durham first their course they bear;
And in Saint Cuthbert's ancient seat
Sang mass, — and tore the book of prayer, —
And trod the bible beneath their feet.
Thence marching southward smooth and free
"They mustered their host at Wetherby,
Full sixteen thousand fair to see," [19]
The Choicest Warriors of the North!
But none for beauty and for worth
Like those eight Sons — who, in a ring,

(Ripe men, or blooming in life's spring)
Each with a lance, erect and tall,
A falchion, and a buckler small,
Stood by their Sire, on Clifford-moor,
To guard the Standard which he bore.
On foot they girt their Father round;
And so will keep the appointed ground
Where'er their march: no steed will he
Henceforth bestride; — triumphantly,
He stands upon the grassy sod,
Trusting himself to the earth, and God.
Rare sight to embolden and inspire!
Proud was the field of Sons and Sire;
Of him the most; and, sooth to say,
No shape of man in all the array
So graced the sunshine of that day.
The monumental pomp of age
Was with this goodly Personage;
A stature undepressed in size,
Unbent, which rather seemed to rise,
In open victory o'er the weight
Of seventy years, to loftier height;
Magnific limbs of withered state;
A face to fear and venerate;
Eyes dark and strong; and on his head
Bright locks of silver hair, thick spread,

Which a brown morion half-concealed,
Light as a hunter's of the field;
And thus, with girdle round his waist,
Whereon the Banner-staff might rest
At need, he stood, advancing high
The glittering, floating Pageantry.
Who sees him? — thousands see, and One
With unparticipated gaze;
Who, 'mong those thousands, friend hath none,
And treads in solitary ways.
He, following wheresoe'er he might,
Hath watched the Banner from afar,
As shepherds watch a lonely star,
Or mariners the distant light
That guides them through a stormy night.
And now, upon a chosen plot
Of rising ground, yon heathy spot!
He takes alone his far-off stand,
With breast unmailed, unweaponed hand.
Bold is his aspect; but his eye
Is pregnant with anxiety,
While, like a tutelary Power,
He there stands fixed from hour to hour:
Yet sometimes in more humble guise,
Upon the turf-clad height he lies
Stretched, herdsman-like, as if to bask

In sunshine were his only task,
Or by his mantle's help to find
A shelter from the nipping wind:
And thus, with short oblivion blest,
His weary spirits gather rest.
Again he lifts his eyes; and lo!
The pageant glancing to and fro;
And hope is wakened by the sight,
He thence may learn, ere fall of night,
Which way the tide is doomed to flow.
To London were the Chieftains bent;
But what avails the bold intent?
A Royal army is gone forth
To quell the Rising of the North;
They march with Dudley at their head,
And, in seven days' space, will to York be led!—
Can such a mighty Host be raised
Thus suddenly, and brought so near?
The Earls upon each other gazed,
And Neville's cheek grew pale with fear;
For, with a high and valiant name,
He bore a heart of timid frame;
And bold if both had been, yet they
"Against so many may not stay." [20]
Back therefore will they hie to seize
A strong Hold on the banks of Tees;

There wait a favourable hour,
Until Lord Dacre with his power
From Naworth come; and Howard's aid
Be with them openly displayed.
While through the Host, from man to man,
A rumour of this purpose ran,
The Standard trusting to the care
Of him who heretofore did bear
That charge, impatient Norton sought
The Chieftains to unfold his thought,
And thus abruptly spake: — "We yield
(And can it be?) an unfought field! —
How oft has strength, the strength of Heaven,
To few triumphantly been given!
Still do our very children boast
Of mitred Thurston [21] — what a Host
He conquered! — Saw we not the Plain
(And flying shall behold again)
Where faith was proved? — while to battle moved
The Standard, on the Sacred Wain
That bore it, compassed round by a bold
Fraternity of Barons old;
And with those grey-haired champions stood,
Under the saintly ensigns three,
The infant Heir of Mowbray's blood —
All confident of victory! —

Shall Percy blush, then, for his name?
Must Westmoreland be asked with shame
Whose were the numbers, where the loss,
In that other day of Neville's Cross? [22]
When the Prior of Durham with holy hand
Raised, as the Vision gave command,
Saint Cuthbert's Relic — far and near
Kenned on the point of a lofty spear;
While the Monks prayed in Maiden's Bower
To God descending in his power.
Less would not at our need be due
To us, who war against the Untrue; —
The delegates of Heaven we rise,
Convoked the impious to chastise:
We, we, the sanctities of old
Would re-establish and uphold:
Be warned" — His zeal the Chiefs confounded,
But word was given, and the trumpet sounded:
Back through the melancholy Host
Went Norton, and resumed his post.
Alas! thought he, and have I borne
This Banner raised with joyful pride,
This hope of all posterity,
By those dread symbols sanctified;
Thus to become at once the scorn
Of babbling winds as they go by,

A spot of shame to the sun's bright eye,
To the light clouds of mockery!
— "Even these poor eight of mine would
stem"—
Half to himself, and half to them
He spake — "would stem, or quell, a force
Ten times their number, man and horse:
This by their own unaided might,
Without their father in their sight,
Without the Cause for which they fight;
A Cause, which on a needful day
Would breed us thousands brave as they."
— So speaking, he his reverend head
Raised towards that Imagery once more:
But the familiar prospect shed
Despondency unfelt before:
A shock of intimations vain,
Dismay, and superstitious pain,
Fell on him, with the sudden thought
Of her by whom the work was wrought:—
Oh wherefore was her countenance bright
With love divine and gentle light?
She would not, could not, disobey,
But her Faith leaned another way.
Ill tears she wept; I saw them fall,
I overheard her as she spake

Sad words to that mute Animal,
The White Doe, in the hawthorn brake;
She steeped, but not for Jesu's sake,
This Cross in tears: by her, and One
Unworthier far we are undone —
Her recreant Brother — he prevailed
Over that tender Spirit — assailed
Too oft, alas! by her whose head
In the cold grave hath long been laid:
She first, in reason's dawn beguiled
Her docile, unsuspecting Child:
Far back — far back my mind must go
To reach the well-spring of this woe!
While thus he brooded, music sweet
Of border tunes was played to cheer
The footsteps of a quick retreat;
But Norton lingered in the rear,
Stung with sharp thoughts; and ere the last
From his distracted brain was cast,
Before his Father, Francis stood,
And spake in firm and earnest mood.
"Though here I bend a suppliant knee
In reverence, and unarmed, I bear
In your indignant thoughts my share;
Am grieved this backward march to see
So careless and disorderly.

I scorn your Chiefs — men who would lead,
And yet want courage at their need:
Then look at them with open eyes!
Deserve they further sacrifice? —
If — when they shrink, nor dare oppose
In open field their gathering foes,
(And fast, from this decisive day,
Yon multitude must melt away;)
If now I ask a grace not claimed
While ground was left for hope; unblamed
Be an endeavour that can do
No injury to them or you.
My Father! I would help to find
A place of shelter, till the rage
Of cruel men do like the wind
Exhaust itself and sink to rest;
Be Brother now to Brother joined!
Admit me in the equipage
Of your misfortunes, that at least,
Whatever fate remain behind,
I may bear witness in my breast
To your nobility of mind!"
"Thou Enemy, my bane and blight!
Oh! bold to fight the Coward's fight
Against all good" — but why declare,
At length, the issue of a prayer

Which love had prompted, yielding scope
Too free to one bright moment's hope?
Suffice it that the Son, who strove
With fruitless effort to allay
That passion, prudently gave way;
Nor did he turn aside to prove
His Brothers' wisdom or their love —
But calmly from the spot withdrew;
His best endeavours to renew,
Should e'er a kindlier time ensue.

CANTO FOURTH

'T is night: in silence looking down,
The Moon, from cloudless ether, sees
A Camp, and a beleaguered Town,
And Castle, like a stately crown
On the steep rocks of winding Tees; —
And southward far, with moor between,
Hill-top, and flood, and forest green,
The bright Moon sees that valley small
Where Rylstone's old sequestered Hall
A venerable image yields
Of quiet to the neighbouring fields;
While from one pillared chimney breathes
The smoke, and mounts in silver wreaths.
— The courts are hushed; — for timely sleep
The greyhounds to their kennel creep;
The peacock in the broad ash tree
Aloft is roosted for the night,
He who in proud posterity
Of colours manifold and bright
Walked round, affronting the daylight;
And higher still, above the bower
Where he is perched, from yon lone Tower
The hall-clock in the clear moonshine
With glittering finger points at nine.

Ah! who could think that sadness here
Hath any sway? or pain, or fear?
A soft and lulling sound is heard
Of streams inaudible by day;
The garden pool's dark surface, stirred
By the night insects in their play,
Breaks into dimples small and bright;
A thousand, thousand rings of light
That shape themselves and disappear
Almost as soon as seen: — and lo!
Not distant far, the milk-white Doe —
The same who quietly was feeding
On the green herb, and nothing heeding,
When Francis, uttering to the Maid
His last words in the yew-tree shade,
Involved whate'er by love was brought
Out of his heart, or crossed his thought,
Or chance presented to his eye,
In one sad sweep of destiny —
The same fair Creature, who hath found
Her way into forbidden ground;
Where now — within this spacious plot
For pleasure made, a goodly spot,
With lawns and beds of flowers, and shades
Of trellis-work in long arcades,
And cirque and crescent framed by wall

Of close-clipt foliage green and tall,
Converging walks, and fountains gay,
And terraces in trim array —
Beneath yon cypress spiring high,
With pine and cedar spreading wide
Their darksome boughs on either side,
In open moonlight doth she lie;
Happy as others of her kind,
That, far from human neighbourhood,
Range unrestricted as the wind,
Through park, or chase, or savage wood.
  But see the consecrated Maid
Emerging from a cedar shade
To open moonshine, where the Doe
Beneath the cypress-spire is laid;
Like a patch of April snow —
Upon a bed of herbage green,
Lingering in a woody glade
Or behind a rocky screen —
Lonely relic! which, if seen
By the shepherd, is passed by
With an inattentive eye.
Nor more regard doth She bestow
Upon the uncomplaining Doe
Now couched at ease, though oft this day
Not unperplexed nor free from pain,

When she had tried, and tried in vain,
Approaching in her gentle way,
To win some look of love, or gain
Encouragement to sport or play —
Attempts which still the heart-sick Maid
Rejected, or with slight repaid.

Yet Emily is soothed; — the breeze
Came fraught with kindly sympathies.
As she approached yon rustic Shed
Hung with late-flowering woodbine, spread
Along the walls and overhead,
The fragrance of the breathing flowers
Revived a memory of those hours
When here, in this remote alcove,
(While from the pendent woodbine came
Like odours, sweet as if the same)
A fondly-anxious Mother strove
To teach her salutary fears
And mysteries above her years.
Yes, she is soothed: an Image faint,
And yet not faint — a presence bright
Returns to her — that blessed Saint
Who with mild looks and language mild
Instructed here her darling Child,
While yet a prattler on the knee,
To worship in simplicity

The invisible God, and take for guide
The faith reformed and purified.
'T is flown — the Vision, and the sense
Of that beguiling influence,
"But oh! thou Angel from above,
Mute Spirit of maternal love,
That stood'st before my eyes, more clear
Than ghosts are fabled to appear
Sent upon embassies of fear;
As thou thy presence hast to me
Vouchsafed, in radiant ministry
Descend on Francis; nor forbear
To greet him with a voice, and say; —
'If hope be a rejected stay,
'Do thou, my Christian Son, beware
'Of that most lamentable snare,
'The self-reliance of despair!'"
Then from within the embowered retreat
Where she had found a grateful seat
Perturbed she issues. She will go!
Herself will follow to the war,
And clasp her Father's knees; — ah, no!
She meets the insuperable bar,
The injunction by her Brother laid;
His parting charge — but ill obeyed —
That interdicted all debate,

All prayer for this cause or for that;
All efforts that would turn aside
The headstrong current of their fate:
Her duty is to stand and wait;
In resignation to abide
The shock, AND FINALLY SECURE
O'ER PAIN AND GRIEF A TRIUMPH PURE.
— She feels it, and her pangs are checked.
But now, as silently she paced
The turf, and thought by thought was chased,
Came One who, with sedate respect,
Approached, and, greeting her, thus spake:
"An old man's privilege I take:
Dark is the time — a woeful day!
Dear daughter of affliction, say
How can I serve you? point the way."
"Rights have you, and may well be bold;
You with my Father have grown old
In friendship — strive — for his sake go —
Turn from us all the coming woe:
This would I beg; but on my mind
A passive stillness is enjoined.
On you, if room for mortal aid
Be left, is no restriction laid;
You not forbidden to recline
With hope upon the Will divine."

"Hope," said the old Man, "must abide
With all of us, whate'er betide.
In Craven's Wilds is many a den,
To shelter persecuted men:
Far under ground is many a cave,
Where they might lie as in the grave,
Until this storm hath ceased to rave:
Or let them cross the River Tweed,
And be at once from peril freed!"
"Ah tempt me not!" she faintly sighed;
"I will not counsel nor exhort,
With my condition satisfied;
But you, at least, may make report
Of what befalls; — be this your task —
This may be done; — 't is all I ask!"
She spake — and from the Lady's sight
The Sire, unconscious of his age,
Departed promptly as a Page
Bound on some errand of delight.
— The noble Francis — wise as brave,
Thought he, may want not skill to save.
With hopes in tenderness concealed,
Unarmed he followed to the field;
Him will I seek: the insurgent Powers
Are now besieging Barnard's Towers, —
"Grant that the Moon which shines this night

May guide them in a prudent flight!"
But quick the turns of chance and change,
And knowledge has a narrow range;
Whence idle fears, and needless pain,
And wishes blind, and efforts vain. —
The Moon may shine, but cannot be
Their guide in flight — already she
Hath witnessed their captivity.
She saw the desperate assault
Upon that hostile castle made; —
But dark and dismal is the vault
Where Norton and his sons are laid!
Disastrous issue! — he had said,
"This night yon faithless Towers must yield,
Or we for ever quit the field.
— Neville is utterly dismayed,
For promise fails of Howard's aid;
And Dacre to our call replies
That *he* is unprepared to rise.
My heart is sick; — this weary pause
Must needs be fatal to our Cause.
The breach is open — on the wall,
This night, the Banner shall be planted!"
— 'T was done: his Sons were with him — all;
They belt him round with hearts undaunted
And others follow; — Sire and Son

Leap down into the court; — "'T is won" —
They shout aloud — but Heaven decreed
That with their joyful shout should close
The triumph of a desperate deed
Which struck with terror friends and foes!
The friend shrinks back — the foe recoils
From Norton and his filial band;
But they, now caught within the toils,
Against a thousand cannot stand; —
The foe from numbers courage drew,
And overpowered that gallant few.
"A rescue for the Standard!" cried
The Father from within the walls;
But, see, the sacred Standard falls! —
Confusion through the Camp spread wide:
Some fled; and some their fears detained:
But ere the Moon had sunk to rest
In her pale chambers of the west,
Of that rash levy nought remained.

CANTO FIFTH

High on a point of rugged ground
Among the wastes of Rylstone Fell
Above the loftiest ridge or mound
Where foresters or shepherds dwell,
An edifice of warlike frame
Stands single — Norton Tower [23] its name —
It fronts all quarters, and looks round
O'er path and road, and plain and dell,
Dark moor, and gleam of pool and stream,
Upon a prospect without bound.
The summit of this bold ascent —
Though bleak and bare, and seldom free
As Pendle-hill or Pennygent
From wind, or frost, or vapours wet —
Had often heard the sound of glee
When there the youthful Nortons met,
To practise games and archery:
How proud and happy they! the crowd
Of Lookers-on how pleased and proud!
And from the scorching noon-tide sun,
From showers, or when the prize was won,
They to the Tower withdrew, and there
Would mirth run round, with generous fare;
And the stern old Lord of Rylstone-hall

Was happiest, proudest, of them all!
But now, his Child, with anguish pale,
Upon the height walks to and fro;
'T is well that she hath heard the tale,
Received the bitterness of woe:
For she *had* hoped, had hoped and feared,
Such rights did feeble nature claim;
And oft her steps had hither steered,
Though not unconscious of self-blame;
For she her brother's charge revered,
His farewell words; and by the same,
Yea by her brother's very name,
Had, in her solitude, been cheered.
Beside the lonely watch-tower stood
That grey-haired Man of gentle blood,
Who with her Father had grown old
In friendship; rival hunters they,
And fellow warriors in their day;
To Rylstone he the tidings brought;
Then on this height the Maid had sought,
And, gently as he could, had told
The end of that dire Tragedy,
Which it had been his lot to see.
To him the Lady turned; "You said
That Francis lives, *he* is not dead?"
"Your noble brother hath been spared;

To take his life they have not dared;
On him and on his high endeavour
The light of praise shall shine for ever!
Nor did he (such Heaven's will) in vain
His solitary course maintain;
Not vainly struggled in the might
Of duty, seeing with clear sight;
He was their comfort to the last,
Their joy till every pang was past.
" I witnessed when to York they came —
What, Lady, if their feet were tied;
They might deserve a good Man's blame;
But marks of infamy and shame —
These were their triumph, these their pride,
Nor wanted 'mid the pressing crowd
Deep feeling, that found utterance loud,
'Lo, Francis comes,' there were who cried,
'A Prisoner once, but now set free!
'T is well, for he the worst defied
Through force of natural piety;
He rose not in this quarrel; he,
For concord's sake and England's good,
Suit to his Brothers often made
With tears, and of his Father prayed —
And when he had in vain withstood
Their purpose — then did he divide,

He parted from them; but at their side
Now walks in unanimity.
Then peace to cruelty and scorn,
While to the prison they are borne,
Peace, peace to all indignity!'

"And so in Prison were they laid —
Oh hear me, hear me, gentle Maid,
For I am come with power to bless,
By scattering gleams, through your distress,
Of a redeeming happiness.
Me did a reverent pity move
And privilege of ancient love;
And, in your service, making bold,
Entrance I gained to that stronghold.

"Your Father gave me cordial greeting;
But to his purposes, that burned
Within him, instantly returned:
He was commanding and entreating,
And said — 'We need not stop, my Son!
Thoughts press, and time is hurrying on' —
And so to Francis he renewed
His words, more calmly thus pursued.

"'Might this our enterprise have sped,
Change wide and deep the Land had seen,
A renovation from the dead,
A spring-tide of immortal green:

The darksome altars would have blazed
Like stars when clouds are rolled away;
Salvation to all eyes that gazed,
Once more the Rood had been upraised
To spread its arms, and stand for aye.
Then, then — had I survived to see
New life in Bolton Priory;
The voice restored, the eye of Truth
Re-opened that inspired my youth;
To see her in her pomp arrayed —
This Banner (for such vow I made)
Should on the consecrated breast
Of that same Temple have found rest:
I would myself have hung it high,
Fit offering of glad victory!
"A shadow of such thought remains
To cheer this sad and pensive time;
A solemn fancy yet sustains
One feeble Being — bids me climb
Even to the last — one effort more
To attest my Faith, if not restore.
"'Hear then,' said he, 'while I impart,
My Son, the last wish of my heart.
The Banner strive thou to regain;
And, if the endeavour prove not vain,
Bear it — to whom if not to thee

Shall I this lonely thought consign? —
Bear it to Bolton Priory,
And lay it on Saint Mary's shrine;
To wither in the sun and breeze
'Mid those decaying sanctities.
There let at least the gift be laid,
The testimony there displayed;
Bold proof that with no selfish aim,
But for lost Faith and Christ's dear name,
I helmeted a brow though white,
And took a place in all men's sight;
Yea offered up this noble Brood,
This fair unrivalled Brotherhood,
And turned away from thee, my Son!
And left — but be the rest unsaid,
The name untouched, the tear unshed; —
My wish is known, and I have done:
Now promise, grant this one request,
This dying prayer, and be thou blest!'

"Then Francis answered — 'Trust thy Son,
For, with God's will, it shall be done!' —

"The pledge obtained, the solemn word
Thus scarcely given, a noise was heard,
And Officers appeared in state
To lead the prisoners to their fate.
They rose, oh! wherefore should I fear

To tell, or, Lady, you to hear?
They rose — embraces none were given —
They stood like trees when earth and heaven
Are calm; they knew each other's worth,
And reverently the Band went forth.
They met, when they had reached the door,
One with profane and harsh intent
Placed there — that he might go before
And, with that rueful Banner borne
Aloft in sign of taunting scorn,
Conduct them to their punishment:
So cruel Sussex, unrestrained
By human feeling, had ordained.
The unhappy Banner Francis saw,
And, with a look of calm command
Inspiring universal awe,
He took it from the soldier's hand;
And all the people that stood round
Confirmed the deed in peace profound.
— High transport did the Father shed
Upon his Son — and they were led,
Led on, and yielded up their breath;
Together died, a happy death! —
But Francis, soon as he had braved
That insult, and the Banner saved,
Athwart the unresisting tide

Of the spectators occupied
In admiration or dismay,
Bore instantly his Charge away."
These things, which thus had in the sight
And hearing passed of Him who stood
With Emily, on the Watch-tower height.
In Rylstone's woeful neighbourhood,
He told; and oftentimes with voice
Of power to comfort or rejoice;
For deepest sorrows that aspire,
Go high, no transport ever higher.
"Yes — God is rich in mercy," said
The old Man to the silent Maid,
"Yet, Lady! shines, through this black night,
One star of aspect heavenly bright;
Your Brother lives — he lives — is come
Perhaps already to his home;
Then let us leave this dreary place."
She yielded, and with gentle pace,
Though without one uplifted look,
To Rylstone-hall her way she took.

CANTO SIXTH

Why comes not Francis? — From the doleful City
He fled, — and, in his flight, could hear
The death-sounds of the Minster-bell:
That sullen stroke pronounced farewell
To Marmaduke, cut off from pity!
To Ambrose that! and then a knell
For him, the sweet half-open Flower!
For all — all dying in one hour!
— Why comes not Francis? Thoughts of love
Should bear him to his Sister dear
With the fleet motion of a dove;
Yea, like a heavenly messenger
Of speediest wing, should he appear.
Why comes he not? — for westward fast
Along the plain of York he past;
Reckless of what impels or leads,
Unchecked he hurries on; — nor heeds
The sorrow, through the Villages,
Spread by triumphant cruelties
Of vengeful military force,
And punishment without remorse.
He marked not, heard not, as he fled,
All but the suffering heart was dead
For him abandoned to blank awe,

To vacancy, and horror strong:
And the first object which he saw,
With conscious sight, as he swept along —
It was the Banner in his hand!
He felt — and made a sudden stand.
  He looked about like one betrayed:
What hath he done? what promise made?
Oh weak, weak moment! to what end
Can such a vain oblation tend,
And he the Bearer? — Can he go
Carrying this instrument of woe,
And find, find anywhere, a right
To excuse him in his Country's sight?
No; will not all men deem the change
A downward course, perverse and strange?
Here is it; — but how? when? must she,
The unoffending Emily,
Again this piteous object see?
  Such conflict long did he maintain,
Nor liberty nor rest could gain:
His own life into danger brought
By this sad burden — even that thought,
Exciting self-suspicion strong
Swayed the brave man to his wrong.
And how — unless it were the sense
Of all-disposing Providence,

Its will unquestionably shown —
How has the Banner clung so fast
To a palsied, and unconscious hand;
Clung to the hand to which it passed
Without impediment? And why,
But that Heaven's purpose might be known,
Doth now no hindrance meet his eye,
No intervention, to withstand
Fulfilment of a Father's prayer
Breathed to a Son forgiven, and blest
When all resentments were at rest,
And life in death laid the heart bare? —
Then, like a spectre sweeping by,
Rushed through his mind the prophecy
Of utter desolation made
To Emily in the yew-tree shade:
He sighed, submitting will and power
To the stern embrace of that grasping hour.
"No choice is left, the deed is mine —
Dead are they, dead! — and I will go,
And, for their sakes, come weal or woe,
Will lay the Relic on the shrine."
So forward with a steady will
He went, and traversed plain and hill;
And up the vale of Wharf his way
Pursued; — and, at the dawn of day,

Attained a summit whence his eyes
Could see the Tower of Bolton rise.
There Francis for a moment's space
Made halt — but hark! a noise behind
Of horsemen at an eager pace!
He heard, and with misgiving mind.
— 'T is Sir George Bowes who leads the Band:
They come, by cruel Sussex sent;
Who, when the Nortons from the hand
Of death had drunk their punishment,
Bethought him, angry and ashamed,
How Francis, with the Banner claimed
As his own charge, had disappeared,
By all the standers-by revered.
His whole bold carriage (which had quelled
Thus far the Opposer, and repelled
All censure, enterprise so bright
That even bad men had vainly striven
Against that overcoming light)
Was then reviewed, and prompt word given
That to what place soever fled
He should be seized, alive or dead.
The troop of horse have gained the height
Where Francis stood in open sight.
They hem him round — "Behold the proof,"
They cried, "the Ensign in his hand!

He did not arm, he walked aloof!
For why? — to save his Father's land; —
Worse Traitor of them all is he,
A Traitor dark and cowardly!"
"I am no Traitor," Francis said,
"Though this unhappy freight I bear;
And must not part with. But beware; —
Err not by hasty zeal misled,
Nor do a suffering Spirit wrong,
Whose self-reproaches are too strong!"
At this he from the beaten road
Retreated towards a brake of thorn,
That like a place of vantage showed;
And there stood bravely, though forlorn.
In self-defence with warlike brow
He stood, — nor weaponless was now;
He from a Soldier's hand had snatched
A spear, — and, so protected, watched
The Assailants, turning round and round;
But from behind with treacherous wound
A Spearman brought him to the ground.
The guardian lance, as Francis fell,
Dropped from him; but his other hand
The Banner clenched; till, from out the Band,
One, the most eager for the prize,
Rushed in; and — while, O grief to tell!

A glimmering sense still left, with eyes
Unclosed the noble Francis lay —
Seized it, as hunters seize their prey;
But not before the warm life-blood
Had tinged more deeply, as it flowed,
The wounds the broidered Banner showed,
Thy fatal work, O Maiden, innocent as good!
  Proudly the Horsemen bore away
The Standard; and where Francis lay
There was he left alone, unwept,
And for two days unnoticed slept.
For at that time bewildering fear
Possessed the country, far and near;
But, on the third day, passing by
One of the Norton Tenantry
Espied the uncovered Corse; the Man
Shrunk as he recognised the face,
And to the nearest homesteads ran
And called the people to the place.
— How desolate is Rylstone-hall!
This was the instant thought of all;
And if the lonely Lady there
Should be; to her they cannot bear
This weight of anguish and despair.
So, when upon sad thoughts had prest
Thoughts sadder still, they deemed it best

That, if the Priest should yield assent
And no one hinder their intent,
Then, they, for Christian pity's sake,
In holy ground a grave would make;
And straightway buried he should be
In the Churchyard of the Priory.

Apart, some little space, was made
The grave where Francis must be laid.
In no confusion or neglect
This did they, — but in pure respect
That he was born of gentle blood;
And that there was no neighbourhood
Of kindred for him in that ground:
So to the Churchyard they are bound,
Bearing the body on a bier;
And psalms they sing — a holy sound
That hill and vale with sadness hear.

But Emily hath raised her head,
And is again disquieted;
She must behold! — so many gone,
Where is the solitary One?
And forth from Rylstone-hall stepped she, —
To seek her Brother forth she went,
And tremblingly her course she bent
Toward Bolton's ruined Priory.
She comes, and in the vale hath heard

The funeral dirge; — she sees the knot
Of people, sees them in one spot —
And darting like a wounded bird
She reached the grave, and with her breast
Upon the ground received the rest, —
The consummation, the whole ruth!
And sorrow of this final truth!

CANTO SEVENTH

"Powers there are
That touch each other to the quick — in modes
Which the gross world no sense hath to perceive,
No soul to dream of."

THOU Spirit, whose angelic hand
Was to the harp a strong command,
Called the submissive strings to wake
In glory for this Maiden's sake,
Say, Spirit! whither hath she fled
To hide her poor afflicted head?
What mighty forest in its gloom
Enfolds her? — is a rifted tomb
Within the wilderness her seat?
Some island which the wild waves beat —
Is that the Sufferer's last retreat?
Or some aspiring rock, that shrouds
Its perilous front in mists and clouds?
High-climbing rock, low sunless dale,
Sea, desert, what do these avail?
Oh take her anguish and her fears
Into a deep recess of years!
'T is done; — despoil and desolation [24]
O'er Rylstone's fair domain have blown;
Pools, terraces, and walks are sown
With weeds; the bowers are overthrown,

Or have given way to slow mutation,
While, in their ancient habitation
The Norton name hath been unknown.
The lordly Mansion of its pride
Is stripped; the ravage hath spread wide
Through park and field, a perishing
That mocks the gladness of the Spring!
And, with this silent gloom agreeing,
Appears a joyless human Being,
Of aspect such as if the waste
Were under her dominion placed.
Upon a primrose bank, her throne
Of quietness, she sits alone;
Among the ruins of a wood,
Erewhile a covert bright and green,
And where full many a brave tree stood,
That used to spread its boughs, and ring
With the sweet bird's carolling.
Behold her, like a virgin Queen,
Neglecting in imperial state
These outward images of fate,
And carrying inward a serene
And perfect sway, through many a thought
Of chance and change, that hath been brought
To the subjection of a holy,
Though stern and rigorous, melancholy!

The like authority, with grace
Of awfulness, is in her face, —
There hath she fixed it; yet it seems
To o'ershadow by no native right
That face, which cannot lose the gleams,
Lose utterly the tender gleams,
Of gentleness and meek delight,
And loving-kindness ever bright:
Such is her sovereign mien: — her dress
(A vest with woollen cincture tied,
A hood of mountain-wool undyed)
Is homely, — fashioned to express
A wandering Pilgrim's humbleness.
And she *hath* wandered, long and far,
Beneath the light of sun and star;
Hath roamed in trouble and in grief,
Driven forward like a withered leaf,
Yea like a ship at random blown
To distant places and unknown.
But now she dares to seek a haven
Among her native wilds of Craven;
Hath seen again her Father's roof,
And put her fortitude to proof;
The mighty sorrow hath been borne,
And she is thoroughly forlorn:
Her soul doth in itself stand fast,

Sustained by memory of the past
And strength of Reason; held above
The infirmities of mortal love;
Undaunted, lofty, calm, and stable,
And awfully impenetrable.
  And so — beneath a mouldered tree,
A self-surviving leafless oak
By unregarded age from stroke
Of ravage saved — sate Emily.
There did she rest, with head reclined,
Herself most like a stately flower,
(Such have I seen) whom chance of birth
Hath separated from its kind,
To live and die in a shady bower,
Single on the gladsome earth.
  When, with a noise like distant thunder,
A troop of deer came sweeping by;
And, suddenly, behold a wonder!
For One, among those rushing deer,
A single One, in mid career
Hath stopped, and fixed her large full eye
Upon the Lady Emily;
A Doe most beautiful, clear-white,
A radiant creature, silver-bright!
  Thus checked, a little while it stayed;
A little thoughtful pause it made;

And then advanced with stealth-like pace,
Drew softly near her, and more near —
Looked round — but saw no cause for fear;
So to her feet the Creature came,
And laid its head upon her knee,
And looked into the Lady's face,
A look of pure benignity,
And fond unclouded memory.
It is, thought Emily, the same,
The very Doe of other years! —
The pleading look the Lady viewed,
And, by her gushing thoughts subdued,
She melted into tears —
A flood of tears, that flowed apace,
Upon the happy Creature's face.
Oh, moment ever blest! O Pair
Beloved of Heaven, Heaven's chosen care,
This was for you a precious greeting;
And may it prove a fruitful meeting!
Joined are they, and the sylvan Doe
Can she depart? can she forego
The Lady, once her playful peer,
And now her sainted Mistress dear?
And will not Emily receive
This lovely chronicler of things
Long past, delights and sorrowings?

Lone Sufferer! will not she believe
The promise in that speaking face;
And welcome, as a gift of grace,
The saddest thought the Creature brings?
That day, the first of a re-union
Which was to teem with high communion,
That day of balmy April weather,
They tarried in the wood together.
And when, ere fall of evening dew,
She from her sylvan haunt withdrew,
The White Doe tracked with faithful pace
The Lady to her dwelling-place;
That nook where, on paternal ground,
A habitation she had found,
The Master of whose humble board
Once owned her Father for his Lord;
A hut, by tufted trees defended,
Where Rylstone brook with Wharf is blended.
When Emily by morning light
Went forth, the Doe stood there in sight.
She shrunk: — with one frail shock of pain
Received and followed by a prayer,
She saw the Creature once again;
Shun will she not, she feels, will bear; —
But, wheresoever she looked round,
All now was trouble-haunted ground;

And therefore now she deems it good
Once more this restless neighbourhood
To leave. — Unwooed, yet unforbidden,
The White Doe followed up the vale,
Up to another cottage, hidden
In the deep fork of Amerdale;[25]
And there may Emily restore
Herself, in spots unseen before.
— Why tell of mossy rock, or tree,
By lurking Dernbrook's pathless side,
Haunts of a strengthening amity
That calmed her, cheered, and fortified?
For she hath ventured now to read
Of time, and place, and thought, and deed —
Endless history that lies
In her silent Follower's eyes;
Who with a power like human reason
Discerns the favourable season,
Skilled to approach or to retire, —
From looks conceiving her desire;
From look, deportment, voice, or mien,
That vary to the heart within.
If she too passionately wreathed
Her arms, or over-deeply breathed,
Walked quick or slowly, every mood
In its degree was understood;

Then well may their accord be true,
And kindliest intercourse ensue.
— Oh! surely 't was a gentle rousing
When she by sudden glimpse espied
The White Doe on the mountain browsing,
Or in the meadow wandered wide!
How pleased, when down the Straggler sank
Beside her, on some sunny bank!
How soothed, when in thick bower enclosed,
They, like a nested pair, reposed!
Fair Vision! when it crossed the Maid
Within some rocky cavern laid,
The dark cave's portal gliding by,
White as whitest cloud on high
Floating through the azure sky.
— What now is left for pain or fear?
That Presence, dearer and more dear,
While they, side by side, were straying,
And the shepherd's pipe was playing,
Did now a very gladness yield
At morning to the dewy field,
And with a deeper peace endued
The hour of moonlight solitude.
With her Companion, in such frame
Of mind, to Rylstone back she came;
And, ranging through the wasted groves,

Received the memory of old loves,
Undisturbed and undistrest,
Into a soul which now was blest
With a soft spring-day of holy,
Mild, and grateful, melancholy:
Not sunless gloom or unenlightened,
But by tender fancies brightened.

When the bells of Rylstone played
Their sabbath music — "God us ayde"![26]
That was the sound they seemed to speak;
Inscriptive legend which I ween
May on those holy bells be seen,
That legend and her Grandsire's name;
And oftentimes the Lady meek
Had in her childhood read the same;
Words which she slighted at that day;
But now, when such sad change was wrought,
And of that lonely name she thought —
The bells of Rylstone seemed to say,
While she sate listening in the shade,
With vocal music, "God us ayde":
And all the hills were glad to bear
Their part in this effectual prayer.

Nor lacked she Reason's firmest power;
But with the White Doe at her side
Up would she climb to Norton Tower,

And thence look round her far and wide,
Her fate there measuring; — all is stilled, —
The weak one hath subdued her heart;
Behold the prophecy fulfilled,
Fulfilled, and she sustains her part!
But here her Brother's words have failed;
Here hath a milder doom prevailed;
That she, of him and all bereft,
Hath yet this faithful Partner left;
This one Associate, that disproves
His words, remains for her, and loves.
If tears are shed, they do not fall
For loss of him — for one, or all;
Yet, sometimes, sometimes doth she weep
Moved gently in her soul's soft sleep;
A few tears down her cheek descend
For this her last and living Friend.
  Bless, tender Hearts, their mutual lot,
And bless for both this savage spot;
Which Emily doth sacred hold
For reasons dear and manifold —
Here hath she, here before her sight,
Close to the summit of this height,
The grassy rock-encircled Pound [27]
In which the Creature first was found.
So beautiful the timid Thrall

(A spotless Youngling white as foam)
Her youngest Brother brought it home;
The youngest, then a lusty boy,
Bore it, or led, to Rylstone-hall
With heart brimful of pride and joy!
But most to Bolton's sacred Pile,
On favouring nights, she loved to go;
There ranged through cloister, court, and aisle,
Attended by the soft-paced Doe;
Nor feared she in the still moonshine
To look upon Saint Mary's shrine;
Nor on the lonely turf that showed
Where Francis slept in his last abode.
For that she came; there oft she sate
Forlorn, but not disconsolate:
And, when she from the abyss returned
Of thought, she neither shrunk nor mourned;
Was happy that she lived to greet
Her mute Companion as it lay
In love and pity at her feet;
How happy in its turn to meet
The recognition! the mild glance
Beamed from that gracious countenance;
Communication, like the ray
Of a new morning, to the nature
And prospects of the inferior Creature!

A mortal Song we sing, by dower
Encouraged of celestial power;
Power which the viewless Spirit shed
By whom we were first visited;
Whose voice we heard, whose hand and wings
Swept like a breeze the conscious strings,
When, left in solitude, erewhile
We stood before this ruined Pile,
And, quitting unsubstantial dreams,
Sang in this Presence kindred themes;
Distress and desolation spread
Through human hearts, and pleasure dead, —
Dead — but to live again on earth,
A second and yet nobler birth;
Dire overthrow, and yet how high
The re-ascent in sanctity!
From fair to fairer; day by day
A more divine and loftier way!
Even such this blessèd Pilgrim trod,
By sorrow lifted towards her God;
Uplifted to the purest sky
Of undisturbed mortality.
Her own thoughts loved she; and could bend
A dear look to her lowly Friend;
There stopped; her thirst was satisfied
With what this innocent spring supplied:

Her sanction inwardly she bore,
And stood apart from human cares:
But to the world returned no more,
Although with no unwilling mind
Help did she give at need, and joined
The Wharfdale peasants in their prayers.
At length, thus faintly, faintly tied
To earth, she was set free, and died.
Thy soul, exalted Emily,
Maid of the blasted family,
Rose to the God from whom it came!
— In Rylstone Church her mortal frame
Was buried by her Mother's side.

Most glorious sunset! and a ray
Survives — the twilight of this day —
In that fair Creature whom the fields
Support, and whom the forest shields;
Who, having filled a holy place,
Partakes, in her degree, Heaven's grace;
And bears a memory and a mind
Raised far above the law of kind;
Haunting the spots with lonely cheer
Which her dear Mistress once held dear:
Loves most what Emily loved most —
The enclosure of this churchyard ground;
Here wanders like a gliding ghost,

And every sabbath here is found;
Comes with the people when the bells
Are heard among the moorland dells,
Finds entrance through yon arch, where way
Lies open on the sabbath-day;
Here walks amid the mournful waste
Of prostrate altars, shrines defaced,
And floors encumbered with rich show
Of fret-work imagery laid low;
Paces softly, or makes halt,
By fractured cell, or tomb, or vault;
By plate of monumental brass
Dim-gleaming among weeds and grass,
And sculptured Forms of Warriors brave:
But chiefly by that single grave,
That one sequestered hillock green,
The pensive visitant is seen.
There doth the gentle Creature lie
With those adversities unmoved;
Calm spectacle, by earth and sky
In their benignity approved!
And aye, methinks, this hoary Pile,
Subdued by outrage and decay,
Looks down upon her with a smile,
A gracious smile, that seems to say —
"Thou, thou art not a child of Time,
But Daughter of the Eternal Prime!".

THE FORCE OF PRAYER

OR, THE FOUNDING OF BOLTON PRIORY

A TRADITION

1807 1815

An Appendage to the "White Doe." My friend, Mr. Rogers, has also written on the subject. The story is preserved in Dr. Whitaker's *History of Craven* — a topographical writer of first-rate merit in all that concerns the past; but such was his aversion from the modern spirit, as shown in the spread of manufactories in those districts of which he treats, that his readers are left entirely ignorant both of the progress of these arts and their real bearing upon the comfort, virtues, and happiness of the inhabitants. While wandering on foot through the fertile valleys and over the moorlands of the Apennine that divides Yorkshire from Lancashire, I used to be delighted with observing the number of substantial cottages that had sprung up on every side, each having its little plot of fertile ground won from the surrounding waste. A bright and warm fire, if needed, was always to be found in these dwellings. The father was at his loom; the children looked healthy and happy. Is it not to be feared that the increase of mechanic power has done away with many of these blessings, and substituted many evils? Alas! if these evils grow, how are they to be checked, and where is the remedy to be found? Political economy will not supply it; that is certain; we must look to something deeper, purer, and higher.

"What is good for a bootless bene?"
With these dark words begins my Tale;

And their meaning is, whence can comfort spring
When Prayer is of no avail?'

"What is good for a bootless bene?"
The Falconer to the Lady said;
And she made answer "ENDLESS SORROW!"
For she knew that her Son was dead.

She knew it by the Falconer's words,
And from the look of the Falconer's eye;
And from the love which was in her soul
For her youthful Romilly.

— Young Romilly through Barden woods
Is ranging high and low;
And holds a greyhound in a leash,
To let slip upon buck or doe.

The pair have reached that fearful chasm,
How tempting to bestride!
For lordly Wharf is there pent in
With rocks on either side.

This striding-place is called THE STRID,
A name which it took of yore:
A thousand years hath it borne that name,
And shall a thousand more.

And hither is young Romilly come,
And what may now forbid
That he, perhaps for the hundredth time,
Shall bound across The Strid?

He sprang in glee, — for what cared he
That the river was strong, and the rocks were steep?—
But the greyhound in the leash hung back,
And checked him in his leap.

The Boy is in the arms of Wharf,
And strangled by a merciless force;
For never more was young Romilly seen
Till he rose a lifeless corse.

Now there is stillness in the vale,
And long, unspeaking sorrow:
Wharf shall be to pitying hearts
A name more sad than Yarrow.

If for a lover the Lady wept,
A solace she might borrow
From death, and from the passion of death; —
Old Wharf might heal her sorrow.

She weeps not for the wedding-day
Which was to be to-morrow:

Her hope was a further-looking hope,
And hers is a mother's sorrow.

He was a tree that stood alone,
And proudly did its branches wave;
And the root of this delightful tree
Was in her husband's grave!

Long, long in darkness did she sit,
And her first words were "Let there be
In Bolton, on the field of Wharf,
A stately Priory!"

The stately Priory was reared;
And Wharf, as he moved along,
To matins joined a mournful voice,
Nor failed at evensong.

And the Lady prayed in heaviness
That looked not for relief!
But slowly did her succour come,
And a patience to her grief.

Oh! there is never sorrow of heart
That shall lack a timely end,
If but to God we turn, and ask
Of Him to be our friend!

COMPOSED WHILE THE AUTHOR WAS ENGAGED IN WRITING A TRACT OCCASIONED BY THE CONVENTION OF CINTRA

1808 1815

Not 'mid the world's vain objects that enslave
The free-born Soul — that World whose vaunted skill
In selfish interest perverts the will,
Whose factions lead astray the wise and brave —
Not there; but in dark wood and rocky cave,
And hollow vale which foaming torrents fill
With omnipresent murmur as they rave
Down their steep beds, that never shall be still:
Here, mighty Nature! in this school sublime
I weigh the hopes and fears of suffering Spain;
For her consult the auguries of time,
And through the human heart explore my way;
And look and listen — gathering, whence I may,
Triumph, and thoughts no bondage can restrain.

COMPOSED AT THE SAME TIME AND ON THE SAME OCCASION

1808 1815

I DROPPED my pen; and listened to the Wind
That sang of trees uptorn and vessels tost —
A midnight harmony; and wholly lost
To the general sense of men by claims confined
Of business, care, or pleasure; or resigned
To timely sleep. Thought I, the impassioned strain,
Which, without aid of numbers, I sustain,
Like acceptation from the World will find.
Yet some with apprehensive ear shall drink
A dirge devoutly breathed o'er sorrows past;
And to the attendant promise will give heed —
The prophecy, — like that of this wild blast,
Which, while it makes the heart with sadness shrink,
Tells also of bright calms that shall succeed.

GEORGE AND SARAH GREEN

1808 1839

Who weeps for strangers? Many wept
For George and Sarah Green;
Wept for that pair's unhappy fate,
Whose grave may here be seen.

By night, upon these stormy fells,
Did wife and husband roam;
Six little ones at home had left,
And could not find that home.

For *any* dwelling-place of man
As vainly did they seek.
He perish'd; and a voice was heard —
The widow's lonely shriek.

Not many steps, and she was left
A body without life —
A few short steps were the chain that bound
The husband to the wife.

Now do those sternly-featured hills
Look gently on this grave;

And quiet now are the depths of air,
As a sea without a wave.

But deeper lies the heart of peace
In quiet more profound;
The heart of quietness is here
Within this churchyard bound.

And from all agony of mind
It keeps them safe, and far
From fear and grief, and from all need
Of sun or guiding star.

O darkness of the grave! how deep,
After that living night —
That last and dreary living one
Of sorrow and affright?

O sacred marriage-bed of death,
That keeps them side by side
In bond of peace, in bond of love,
That may not be untied!

HOFFER

1809 1815

Of mortal parents is the Hero born
By whom the undaunted Tyrolese are led?
Or is it Tell's great Spirit, from the dead
Returned to animate an age forlorn?
He comes like Phœbus through the gates of morn
When dreary darkness is discomfited,
Yet mark his modest state! upon his head,
That simple crest, a heron's plume, is worn.
O Liberty! they stagger at the shock
From van to rear — and with one mind would flee,
But half their host is buried: — rock on rock
Descends: — beneath this godlike Warrior, see!
Hills, torrents, woods, embodied to bemock
The Tyrant, and confound his cruelty.

"ADVANCE — COME FORTH FROM THY TYROLEAN GROUND"

1809 1815

Advance — come forth from thy Tyrolean ground,
Dear Liberty! stern Nymph of soul untamed;
Sweet Nymph, O rightly of the mountains named!
Through the long chain of Alps from mound to mound
And o'er the eternal snows, like Echo, bound;
Like Echo, when the hunter train at dawn
Have roused her from her sleep: and forest-lawn,
Cliffs, woods and caves, her viewless steps resound
And babble of her pastime! — On, dread Power!
With such invisible motion speed thy flight,
Through hanging clouds, from craggy height to height,
Through the green vales and through the herdsman's
bower —
That all the Alps may gladden in thy might,
Here, there, and in all places at one hour.

FEELINGS OF THE TYROLESE

1809 1815

The Land we from our fathers had in trust,
And to our children will transmit, or die:
This is our maxim, this our piety;
And God and Nature say that it is just.
That which we *would* perform in arms — we must!
We read the dictate in the infant's eye;
In the wife's smile; and in the placid sky;
And, at our feet, amid the silent dust
Of them that were before us. — Sing aloud
Old songs, the precious music of the heart!
Give, herds and flocks, your voices to the wind!
While we go forth, a self-devoted crowd,
With weapons grasped in fearless hands, to assert
Our virtue, and to vindicate mankind.

"ALAS! WHAT BOOTS THE LONG LABORIOUS QUEST"

1809 1815

Alas! what boots the long laborious quest
Of moral prudence, sought through good and ill;
Or pains abstruse — to elevate the will,
And lead us on to that transcendent rest
Where every passion shall the sway attest
Of Reason, seated on her sovereign hill;
What is it but a vain and curious skill,
If sapient Germany must lie deprest,
Beneath the brutal sword? — Her haughty Schools
Shall blush; and may not we with sorrow say —
A few strong instincts and a few plain rules,
Among the herdsmen of the Alps, have wrought
More for mankind at this unhappy day
Than all the pride and intellect and thought?

"AND IS IT AMONG RUDE UNTUTORED DALES"

1809 1815

And is it among rude untutored Dales,
There, and there only, that the heart is true?
And, rising to repel or to subdue,
Is it by rocks and woods that man prevails?
Ah no! though Nature's dread protection fails,
There is a bulwark in the soul. This knew
Iberian Burghers when the sword they drew
In Zaragoza, naked to the gales
Of fiercely-breathing war. The truth was felt
By Palafox, and many a brave compeer,
Like him of noble birth and noble mind;
By ladies, meek-eyed women without fear;
And wanderers of the street, to whom is dealt
The bread which without industry they find.

"O'ER THE WIDE EARTH, ON MOUNTAIN AND ON PLAIN"

1809 1815

O'ER the wide earth, on mountain and on plain,
Dwells in the affections and the soul of man
A Godhead, like the universal PAN;
But more exalted, with a brighter train:
And shall his bounty be dispensed in vain,
Showered equally on city and on field,
And neither hope nor stedfast promise yield
In these usurping times of fear and pain?
Such doom awaits us. Nay, forbid it Heaven!
We know the arduous strife, the eternal laws
To which the triumph of all good is given,
High sacrifice, and labour without pause,
Even to the death: — else wherefore should the eye
Of man converse with immortality?

ON THE FINAL SUBMISSION OF THE TYROLESE

1809 1815

It was a *moral* end for which they fought;
Else how, when mighty Thrones were put to shame,
Could they, poor Shepherds, have preserved an aim,
A resolution, or enlivening thought?
Nor hath that moral good been *vainly* sought;
For in their magnanimity and fame
Powers have they left, an impulse, and a claim
Which neither can be overturned nor bought.
Sleep, Warriors, sleep! among your hills repose!
We know that ye, beneath the stern control
Of awful prudence, keep the unvanquished soul:
And when, impatient of her guilt and woes,
Europe breaks forth; then, Shepherds! shall ye rise
For perfect triumph o'er your Enemies.

"HAIL, ZARAGOZA! IF WITH UNWET EYE" [23]

1809 1815

Hail, Zaragoza! If with unwet eye
We can approach, thy sorrow to behold,
Yet is the heart not pitiless nor cold;
Such spectacle demands not tear or sigh.
These desolate remains are trophies high
Of more than martial courage in the breast
Of peaceful civic virtue: they attest
Thy matchless worth to all posterity.
Blood flowed before thy sight without remorse;
Disease consumed thy vitals; War upheaved
The ground beneath thee with volcanic force:
Dread trials! yet encountered and sustained
Till not a wreck of help or hope remained,
And law was from necessity received.

"SAY, WHAT IS HONOUR? — 'T IS THE FINEST SENSE"

1809 1815

Say, what is Honour? — 'T is the finest sense
Of *justice* which the human mind can frame,
Intent each lurking frailty to disclaim,
And guard the way of life from all offence
Suffered or done. When lawless violence
Invades a Realm, so pressed that in the scale
Of perilous war her weightiest armies fail,
Honour is hopeful elevation, — whence
Glory, and triumph. Yet with politic skill
Endangered States may yield to terms unjust;
Stoop their proud heads, but not unto the dust —
A Foe's most favourite purpose to fulfil:
Happy occasions oft by self-mistrust
Are forfeited; but infamy doth kill.

"THE MARTIAL COURAGE OF A DAY IS VAIN"

1809 1815

The martial courage of a day is vain,
An empty noise of death the battle's roar,
If vital hope be wanting to restore,
Or fortitude be wanting to sustain,
Armies or kingdoms. We have heard a strain
Of triumph, how the labouring Danube bore
A weight of hostile corses; drenched with gore
Were the wide fields, the hamlets heaped with slain.
Yet see (the mighty tumult overpast)
Austria a daughter of her Throne hath sold!
And her Tyrolean Champion we behold
Murdered, like one ashore by shipwreck cast,
Murdered without relief. Oh! blind as bold,
To think that such assurance can stand fast!

"BRAVE SCHILL! BY DEATH DELIVERED"

1809 1815

Brave Schill! by death delivered, take thy flight
From Prussia's timid region. Go, and rest
With heroes, 'mid the islands of the Blest,
Or in the fields of empyrean light.
A meteor wert thou crossing a dark night:
Yet shall thy name, conspicuous and sublime,
Stand in the spacious firmament of time,
Fixed as a star: such glory is thy right.
Alas! it may not be: for earthly fame
Is Fortune's frail dependant; yet there lives
A Judge, who, as man claims by merit, gives;
To whose all-pondering mind a noble aim,
Faithfully kept, is as a noble deed;
In whose pure sight all virtue doth succeed.

"CALL NOT THE ROYAL SWEDE UNFORTUNATE"

1809 1815

Call not the royal Swede unfortunate,
Who never did to Fortune bend the knee;
Who slighted fear; rejected steadfastly
Temptation; and whose kingly name and state
Have "perished by his choice, and not his fate!"
Hence lives He, to his inner self endeared;
And hence, wherever virtue is revered,
He sits a more exalted Potentate,
Throned in the hearts of men. Should Heaven ordain
That this great Servant of a righteous cause
Must still have sad or vexing thoughts to endure,
Yet may a sympathising spirit pause,
Admonished by these truths, and quench all pain
In thankful joy and gratulation pure.[29]

"LOOK NOW ON THAT ADVENTURER WHO HATH PAID"

1809 1815

Look now on that Adventurer who hath paid
His vows to Fortune; who, in cruel slight
Of virtuous hope, of liberty, and right,
Hath followed wheresoe'er a way was made
By the blind Goddess, — ruthless, undismayed;
And so hath gained at length a prosperous height,
Round which the elements of worldly might
Beneath his haughty feet, like clouds, are laid.
O joyless power that stands by lawless force!
Curses are *his* dire portion, scorn, and hate,
Internal darkness and unquiet breath;
And, if old judgments keep their sacred course,
Him from that height shall Heaven precipitate
By violent and ignominious death.

"IS THERE A POWER THAT CAN SUSTAIN AND CHEER"

1809 1815

Is there a power that can sustain and cheer
The captive chieftain, by a tyrant's doom,
Forced to descend into his destined tomb —
A dungeon dark! where he must waste the year,
And lie cut off from all his heart holds dear;
What time his injured country is a stage
Whereon deliberate Valour and the rage
Of righteous Vengeance side by side appear,
Filling from morn to night the heroic scene
With deeds of hope and everlasting praise: —
Say can he think of this with mind serene
And silent fetters? Yes, if visions bright
Shine on his soul, reflected from the days
When he himself was tried in open light.

"AH! WHERE IS PALAFOX? NOR TONGUE NOR PEN"

1810 1815

Ah! where is Palafox? Nor tongue nor pen
Reports of him, his dwelling or his grave!
Does yet the unheard-of vessel ride the wave?
Or is she swallowed up, remote from ken
Of pitying human nature? Once again
Methinks that we shall hail thee, Champion brave,
Redeemed to baffle that imperial Slave,
And through all Europe cheer desponding men
With new-born hope. Unbounded is the might
Of martyrdom, and fortitude, and right.
Hark, how thy Country triumphs! – Smilingly
The Eternal looks upon her sword that gleams,
Like his own lightning, over mountains high,
On rampart, and the banks of all her streams.

"IN DUE OBSERVANCE OF AN ANCIENT RITE"

1810 1815

In due observance of an ancient rite,
The rude Biscayans, when their children lie
Dead in the sinless time of infancy,
Attire the peaceful corse in vestments white;
And, in like sign of cloudless triumph bright,
They bind the unoffending creature's brows
With happy garlands of the pure white rose:
Then do a festal company unite
In choral song; and, while the uplifted cross
Of Jesus goes before, the child is borne
Uncovered to his grave: 't is closed, — her loss
The Mother *then* mourns, as she needs must mourn;
But soon, through Christian faith, is grief subdued;
And joy returns, to brighten fortitude.

FEELINGS OF A NOBLE BISCAYAN AT ONE OF THOSE FUNERALS

1810 1815

YET, yet, Biscayans! we must meet our Foes
With firmer soul, yet labour to regain
Our ancient freedom; else 't were worse than vain
To gather round the bier these festal shows.
A garland fashioned of the pure white rose
Becomes not one whose father is a slave:
Oh, bear the infant covered to his grave!
These venerable mountains now enclose
A people sunk in apathy and fear.
If this endure, farewell, for us, all good!
The awful light of heavenly innocence
Will fail to illuminate the infant's bier;
And guilt and shame, from which is no defence,
Descend on all that issues from our blood.

ON A CELEBRATED EVENT IN ANCIENT HISTORY

1810 1815

A Roman Master stands on Grecian ground,
And to the people at the Isthmian Games
Assembled, He, by a herald's voice, proclaims
The Liberty of Greece: — the words rebound
Until all voices in one voice are drowned;
Glad acclamation by which air was rent!
And birds, high-flying in the element,
Dropped to the earth, astonished at the sound!
Yet were the thoughtful grieved; and still that voice
Haunts, with sad echoes, musing Fancy's ear:
Ah! that a *Conqueror's* words should be so dear:
Ah! that a *boon* could shed such rapturous joys!
A gift of that which is not to be given
By all the blended powers of Earth and Heaven.

UPON THE SAME EVENT

1810 1815

When, far and wide, swift as the beams of morn
The tidings past of servitude repealed,
And of that joy which shook the Isthmian Field,
The rough Ætolians smiled with bitter scorn.
"'T is known," cried they, "that he, who would adorn
His envied temples with the Isthmian crown,
Must either win, through effort of his own,
The prize, or be content to see it worn
By more deserving brows. — Yet so ye prop,
Sons of the brave who fought at Marathon,
Your feeble spirits! Greece her head hath bowed,
As if the wreath of liberty thereon
Would fix itself as smoothly as a cloud,
Which, at Jove's will, descends on Pelion's top."

THE OAK OF GUERNICA

1810 1815

The ancient oak of Guernica, says Laborde in his account of Biscay, is a most venerable natural monument. Ferdinand and Isabella, in the year 1476, after hearing mass in the church of Santa Maria de la Antigua, repaired to this tree, under which they swore to the Biscayans to maintain their *fueros* (privileges). What other interest belongs to it in the minds of this people will appear from the following.

SUPPOSED ADDRESS TO THE SAME

Oak of Guernica! Tree of holier power
Than that which in Dodona did enshrine
(So faith too fondly deemed) a voice divine
Heard from the depths of its aerial bower —
How canst thou flourish at this blighting hour?
What hope, what joy can sunshine bring to thee,
Or the soft breezes from the Atlantic sea,
The dews of morn, or April's tender shower?
Stroke merciful and welcome would that be
Which should extend thy branches on the ground,
If never more within their shady round
Those lofty-minded Lawgivers shall meet,
Peasant and lord, in their appointed seat,
Guardians of Biscay's ancient liberty.

INDIGNATION OF A HIGH-MINDED SPANIARD

1810 1815

We can endure that He should waste our lands,
Despoil our temples, and by sword and flame
Return us to the dust from which we came;
Such food a Tyrant's appetite demands:
And we can brook the thought that by his hands
Spain may be overpowered, and he possess,
For his delight, a solemn wilderness
Where all the brave lie dead. But, when of bands
Which he will break for us he dares to speak,
Of benefits, and of a future day
When our enlightened minds shall bless his sway;
Then, the strained heart of fortitude proves weak;
Our groans, our blushes, our pale cheeks declare
That he has power to inflict what we lack strength
to bear.

"AVAUNT ALL SPECIOUS PLIANCY OF MIND"

1810 1815

Avaunt all specious pliancy of mind
In men of low degree, all smooth pretence!
I better like a blunt indifference,
And self-respecting slowness, disinclined
To win me at first sight: and be there joined
Patience and temperance with this high reserve,
Honour that knows the path and will not swerve;
Affections, which, if put to proof, are kind;
And piety towards God. Such men of old
Were England's native growth; and, throughout Spain
(Thanks to high God) forests of such remain:
Then for that Country let our hopes be bold;
For matched with these shall policy prove vain,
Her arts, her strength, her iron, and her gold.

"O'ERWEENING STATESMEN HAVE FULL LONG RELIED"[30]

1810 1815

O'erweening Statesmen have full long relied
On fleets and armies, and external wealth:
But from *within* proceeds a Nation's health;
Which shall not fail, though poor men cleave with pride
To the paternal floor; or turn aside,
In the thronged city, from the walks of gain,
As being all unworthy to detain
A Soul by contemplation sanctified.
There are who cannot languish in this strife,
Spaniards of every rank, by whom the good
Of such high course was felt and understood;
Who to their Country's cause have bound a life
Erewhile, by solemn consecration, given
To labour and to prayer, to Nature, and to Heaven.

THE FRENCH AND THE SPANISH GUERILLAS

1810 1815

Hunger, and sultry heat, and nipping blast
From bleak hill-top, and length of march by night
Through heavy swamp, or over snow-clad height —
These hardships ill-sustained, these dangers past,
The roving Spanish Bands are reached at last,
Charged, and dispersed like foam: but as a flight
Of scattered quails by signs do reunite,
So these, — and, heard of once again, are chased
With combinations of long-practised art
And newly-kindled hope; but they are fled —
Gone are they, viewless as the buried dead:
Where now? — Their sword is at the Foeman's heart;
And thus from year to year his walk they thwart,
And hang like dreams around his guilty bed.

EPITAPHS

TRANSLATED FROM CHIABRERA

1810

Those from Chiabrera were chiefly translated when Mr. Coleridge was writing his Friend, in which periodical my "Essay on Epitaphs," written about that time, was first published. For further notice of Chiabrera, in connection with his Epitaphs, see "Musings at Aquapendente."

I

1810 1837

Weep not, beloved Friends! nor let the air
For me with sighs be troubled. Not from life
Have I been taken; this is genuine life
And this alone — the life which now I live
In peace eternal; where desire and joy
Together move in fellowship without end. —
Francesco Ceni willed that, after death,
His tombstone thus should speak for him. And surely
Small cause there is for that fond wish of ours
Long to continue in this world; a world
That keeps not faith, nor yet can point a hope
To good, whereof itself is destitute.

EPITAPHS

II

1810 1810

Perhaps some needful service of the State
Drew Titus from the depth of studious bowers,
And doomed him to contend in faithless courts,
Where gold determines between right and wrong.
Yet did at length his loyalty of heart,
And his pure native genius, lead him back
To wait upon the bright and gracious Muses,
Whom he had early loved. And not in vain
Such course he held! Bologna's learnèd schools
Were gladdened by the Sage's voice, and hung
With fondness on those sweet Nestorian strains.
There pleasure crowned his days; and all his thoughts
A roseate fragrance breathed. — [31] O human life,
That never art secure from dolorous change!
Behold a high injunction suddenly
To Arno's side hath brought him, and he charmed
A Tuscan audience: but full soon was called
To the perpetual silence of the grave.
Mourn, Italy, the loss of him who stood
A Champion stedfast and invincible,
To quell the rage of literary War!

EPITAPHS

III

1810 1810

O Thou who movest onward with a mind
Intent upon thy way, pause, though in haste!
'T will be no fruitless moment. I was born
Within Savona's walls, of gentle blood.
On Tiber's banks my youth was dedicate
To sacred studies; and the Roman Shepherd
Gave to my charge Urbino's numerous flock.
Well did I watch, much laboured, nor had power
To escape from many and strange indignities;
Was smitten by the great ones of the world,
But did not fall; for Virtue braves all shocks,
Upon herself resting immoveably.
Me did a kindlier fortune then invite
To serve the glorious Henry, King of France,
And in his hands I saw a high reward
Stretched out for my acceptance, — but Death came.
Now, Reader, learn from this my fate, how false,
How treacherous to her promise, is the world;
And trust in God — to whose eternal doom
Must bend the sceptred Potentates of earth.

EPITAPHS

IV

1810 1815

THERE never breathed a man who, when his life
Was closing, might not of that life relate
Toils long and hard. – The warrior will report
Of wounds, and bright swords flashing in the field,
And blast of trumpets. He who hath been doomed
To bow his forehead in the courts of kings,
Will tell of fraud and never-ceasing hate,
Envy and heart-inquietude, derived
From intricate cabals of treacherous friends.
I, who on shipboard lived from earliest youth,
Could represent the countenance horrible
Of the vexed waters, and the indignant rage
Of Auster and Boötes. Fifty years
Over the well-steered galleys did I rule: —
From huge Pelorus to the Atlantic pillars,
Rises no mountain to mine eyes unknown;
And the broad gulfs I traversed oft and oft:
Of every cloud which in the heavens might stir
I knew the force; and hence the rough sea's pride
Availed not to my Vessel's overthrow.
What noble pomp and frequent have not I
On regal decks beheld! yet in the end
I learned that one poor moment can suffice

To equalise the lofty and the low.
We sail the sea of life — a *Calm* One finds,
And One a *Tempest* — and, the voyage o'er,
Death is the quiet haven of us all.
If more of my condition ye would know,
Savona was my birth-place, and I sprang
Of noble parents; seventy years and three
Lived I — then yielded to a slow disease.

V

1810 1837

True is it that Ambrosio Salinero
With an untoward fate was long involved
In odious litigation; and full long,
Fate harder still! had he to endure assaults
Of racking malady. And true it is
That not the less a frank courageous heart
And buoyant spirit triumphed over pain;
And he was strong to follow in the steps
Of the fair Muses. Not a covert path
Leads to the dear Parnassian forest's shade,
That might from him be hidden; not a track
Mounts to pellucid Hippocrene, but he
Had traced its windings. — This Savona knows,
Yet no sepulchral honours to her Son

She paid, for in our age the heart is ruled
Only by gold. And now a simple stone
Inscribed with this memorial here is raised
By his bereft, his lonely, Chiabrera.
Think not, O Passenger! who read'st the lines,
That an exceeding love hath dazzled me;
No — he was One whose memory ought to spread
Where'er Permessus bears an honoured name,
And live as long as its pure stream shall flow.

VI

1810 1815

Destined to war from very infancy
Was I, Roberto Dati, and I took
In Malta the white symbol of the Cross:
Nor in life's vigorous season did I shun
Hazard or toil; among the sands was seen
Of Libya; and not seldom, on the banks
Of wide Hungarian Danube, 't was my lot
To hear the sanguinary trumpet sounded.
So lived I, and repined not at such fate:
This only grieves me, for it seems a wrong,
That stripped of arms I to my end am brought
On the soft down of my paternal home.
Yet haply Arno shall be spared all cause

To blush for me. Thou, loiter not nor halt
In thy appointed way, and bear in mind
How fleeting and how frail is human life!

VII

1810 1837

O FLOWER of all that springs from gentle blood,
And all that generous nurture breeds to make
Youth amiable; O friend so true of soul
To fair Aglaia; by what envy moved,
Lelius! has death cut short thy brilliant day
In its sweet opening? and what dire mishap
Has from Savona torn her best delight?
For thee she mourns, nor e'er will cease to mourn;
And, should the out-pourings of her eyes suffice not
For her heart's grief, she will entreat Sebeto
Not to withhold his bounteous aid, Sebeto
Who saw thee, on his margin, yield to death,
In the chaste arms of thy beloved Love!
What profit riches? what does youth avail!
Dust are our hopes; — I, weeping bitterly,
Penned these sad lines, nor can forbear to pray
That every gentle Spirit hither led
May read them, not without some bitter tears.

EPITAPHS

VIII

1810 1815

Not without heavy grief of heart did He
On whom the duty fell (for at that time
The father sojourned in a distant land)
Deposit in the hollow of this tomb
A brother's Child, most tenderly beloved!
Francesco was the name the Youth had borne,
Pozzobonnelli his illustrious house;
And, when beneath this stone the Corse was laid,
The eyes of all Savona streamed with tears.
Alas! the twentieth April of his life
Had scarcely flowered: and at this early time,
By genuine virtue he inspired a hope
That greatly cheered his country: to his kin
He promised comfort; and the flattering thoughts
His friends had in their fondness entertained,
He suffered not to languish or decay.[32]
Now is there not good reason to break forth
Into a passionate lament? — O Soul!
Short while a Pilgrim in our nether world,
Do thou enjoy the calm empyreal air;
And round this earthly tomb let roses rise,
An everlasting spring! in memory
Of that delightful fragrance which was once
From thy mild manners quietly exhaled.

EPITAPHS

IX

1810 1815

Pause, courteous Spirit! — Balbi supplicates
That Thou, with no reluctant voice, for him
Here laid in mortal darkness, wouldst prefer
A prayer to the Redeemer of the world.
This to the dead by sacred right belongs;
All else is nothing. — Did occasion suit
To tell his worth, the marble of this tomb
Would ill suffice: for Plato's lore sublime,
And all the wisdom of the Stagyrite,
Enriched and beautified his studious mind:
With Archimedes also he conversed
As with a chosen friend; nor did he leave
Those laureat wreaths ungathered which the Nymphs
Twine near their loved Permessus. — Finally,
Himself above each lower thought uplifting,
His ears he closed to listen to the songs
Which Sion's Kings did consecrate of old;
And his Permessus found on Lebanon.
A blessèd Man! who of protracted days
Made not, as thousands do, a vulgar sleep;
But truly did *He* live his life. Urbino,
Take pride in him! — O Passenger, farewell!

MATERNAL GRIEF

1810 1842

This was in part an overflow from the Solitary's description of his own and his wife's feelings upon the decease of their children. (See "Excursion," book III.)

DEPARTED Child! I could forget thee once
Though at my bosom nursed; this woeful gain
Thy dissolution brings, that in my soul
Is present and perpetually abides
A shadow, never, never to be displaced
By the returning substance, seen or touched,
Seen by mine eyes, or clasped in my embrace.
Absence and death how differ they! and how
Shall I admit that nothing can restore
What one short sigh so easily removed? —
Death, life, and sleep, reality and thought,
Assist me, God, their boundaries to know,
O teach me calm submission to thy Will!
The Child she mourned had overstepped the pale
Of Infancy, but still did breathe the air
That sanctifies its confines, and partook
Reflected beams of that celestial light
To all the Little-ones on sinful earth

Not unvouchsafed — a light that warmed and cheered
Those several qualities of heart and mind
Which, in her own blest nature, rooted deep,
Daily before the Mother's watchful eye,
And not hers only, their peculiar charms
Unfolded, — beauty, for its present self,
And for its promises to future years,
With not unfrequent rapture fondly hailed.
  Have you espied upon a dewy lawn
A pair of Leverets each provoking each
To a continuance of their fearless sport,
Two separate Creatures in their several gifts
Abounding, but so fashioned that, in all
That Nature prompts them to display, their looks,
Their starts of motion and their fits of rest,
An undistinguishable style appears
And character of gladness, as if Spring
Lodged in their innocent bosoms, and the spirit
Of the rejoicing morning were their own?
  Such union, in the lovely Girl maintained
And her twin Brother, had the parent seen,
Ere, pouncing like a ravenous bird of prey,
Death in a moment parted them, and left
The Mother, in her turns of anguish, worse
Than desolate; for oft-times from the sound
Of the survivor's sweetest voice (dear child,

He knew it not) and from his happiest looks,
Did she extract the food of self-reproach,
As one that lived ungrateful for the stay
By Heaven afforded to uphold her maimed
And tottering spirit. And full oft the Boy,
Now first acquainted with distress and grief,
Shrunk from his Mother's presence, shunned with fear
Her sad approach, and stole away to find,
In his known haunts of joy where'er he might,
A more congenial object. But, as time
Softened her pangs and reconciled the child
To what he saw, he gradually returned,
Like a scared Bird encouraged to renew
A broken intercourse; and, while his eyes
Were yet with pensive fear and gentle awe
Turned upon her who bore him, she would stoop
To imprint a kiss that lacked not power to spread
Faint colour over both their pallid cheeks,
And stilled his tremulous lip. Thus they were calmed
And cheered; and now together breathe fresh air
In open fields; and when the glare of day
Is gone, and twilight to the Mother's wish
Befriends the observance, readily they join
In walks whose boundary is the lost One's grave,
Which he with flowers hath planted, finding there
Amusement, where the Mother does not miss

MATERNAL GRIEF

Dear consolation, kneeling on the turf
In prayer, yet blending with that solemn rite
Of pious faith the vanities of grief;
For such, by pitying Angels and by Spirits
Transferred to regions upon which the clouds
Of our weak nature rest not, must be deemed
Those willing tears, and unforbidden sighs,
And all those tokens of a cherished sorrow,
Which, soothed and sweetened by the grace of Heaven
As now it is, seems to her own fond heart,
Immortal as the love that gave it being.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A CHILD THREE YEARS OLD

1811 1815

Written at Allanbank, Grasmere. Picture of my Daughter Catharine, who died the year after.

Loving she is, and tractable, though wild;
And Innocence hath privilege in her
To dignify arch looks and laughing eyes;
And feats of cunning; and the pretty round
Of trespasses, affected to provoke
Mock-chastisement and partnership in play.
And, as a faggot sparkles on the hearth,
Not less if unattended and alone
Than when both young and old sit gathered round
And take delight in its activity;
Even so this happy Creature of herself
Is all-sufficient, solitude to her
Is blithe society, who fills the air
With gladness and involuntary songs.
Light are her sallies as the tripping fawn's
Forth-startled from the fern where she lay couched;

CHARACTERISTICS OF A CHILD

Unthought-of, unexpected, as the stir
Of the soft breeze ruffling the meadow-flowers,
Or from before it chasing wantonly
The many-coloured images imprest
Upon the bosom of a placid lake.

SPANISH GUERILLAS

1811 1815

They seek, are sought; to daily battle led,
Shrink not, though far outnumbered by their Foes,
For they have learnt to open and to close
The ridges of grim war; and at their head
Are captains such as erst their country bred
Or fostered, self-supported chiefs, — like those
Whom hardy Rome was fearful to oppose;
Whose desperate shock the Carthaginian fled.
In One who lived unknown a shepherd's life
Redoubted Viriatus breathes again;
And Mina, nourished in the studious shade,
With that great Leader [33] vies, who, sick of strife
And bloodshed, longed in quiet to be laid
In some green island of the western main.

"THE POWER OF ARMIES IS A VISIBLE THING"

1811 1815

The power of Armies is a visible thing,
Formal, and circumscribed in time and space;
But who the limits of that power shall trace
Which a brave People into light can bring
Or hide, at will, — for freedom combating
By just revenge inflamed? No foot may chase,
No eye can follow, to a fatal place
That power, that spirit, whether on the wing
Like the strong wind, or sleeping like the wind
Within its awful caves. — From year to year
Springs this indigenous produce far and near;
No craft this subtle element can bind,
Rising like water from the soil, to find
In every nook a lip that it may cheer.

"HERE PAUSE: THE POET CLAIMS AT LEAST THIS PRAISE"

1811 1815

HERE pause: the poet claims at least this praise,
That virtuous Liberty hath been the scope
Of his pure song, which did not shrink from hope
In the worst moment of these evil days;
From hope, the paramount *duty* that Heaven lays,
For its own honour, on man's suffering heart.
Never may from our souls one truth depart —
That an accursèd thing it is to gaze
On prosperous tyrants with a dazzled eye;
Nor — touched with due abhorrence of *their* guilt
For whose dire ends tears flow, and blood is spilt,
And justice labours in extremity —
Forget thy weakness, upon which is built,
O wretched man, the throne of tyranny!

EPISTLE

TO SIR GEORGE HOWLAND BEAUMONT, BART.

FROM THE SOUTHWEST COAST OF CUMBERLAND

1811 1842

This poem opened, when first written, with a paragraph that has been transferred as an introduction to the first series of my Scotch Memorials. The journey, of which the first part is here described, was from Grasmere to Bootle on the southwest coast of Cumberland, the whole among mountain roads through a beautiful country; and we had fine weather. The verses end with our breakfast at the head of Yewdale in a yeoman's house, which, like all the other property in that sequestered vale, has passed or is passing into the hands of Mr. James Marshall of Monk Coniston, — in Mr. Knott's, the late owner's, time called Waterhead. Our hostess married a Mr. Oldfield, a lieutenant in the Navy: they lived together for some time at Hacket, where she still resides as his widow. It was in front of that house, on the mountain-side, near which stood the peasant who, while we were passing at a distance, saluted us, waving a kerchief in her hand as described in the Poem. (This matron and her husband were then residing at the Hacket. The house and its inmates are referred to in the fifth book of the "Excursion," in the passage beginning —

> "You behold,
> High on the breast of yon dark mountain, dark
> With stony barrenness, a shining speck." — J. C.)

The dog which we met with soon after our starting belonged

to Mr. Rowlandson, who for forty years was curate of Grasmere in place of the rector, who lived to extreme old age in a state of insanity. Of this Mr. R. much might be said both with reference to his character, and the way in which he was regarded by his parishioners. He was a man of robust frame, had a firm voice and authoritative manner, of strong natural talents, of which he was himself conscious, for he has been heard to say (it grieves me to add) with an oath — "If I had been brought up at college I should have been a bishop." Two vices used to struggle in him for mastery, avarice and the love of strong drink: but avarice, as is common in like cases, always got the better of its opponent; for, though he was often intoxicated, it was never, I believe, at his own expense. As has been said of one in a more exalted station, he would take any *given* quantity. I have heard a story of him which is worth the telling. One summer's morning, our Grasmere curate, after a night's carouse in the vale of Langdale, on his return home, having reached a point near which the whole of the vale of Grasmere might be seen with the lake immediately below him, stepped aside and sat down on the turf. After looking for some time at the landscape, then in the perfection of its morning beauty, he exclaimed — "Good God, that I should have led so long such a life in such a place!" -- This no doubt was deeply felt by him at the time, but I am not authorised to say that any noticeable amendment followed. Penuriousness strengthened upon him as his body grew feebler with age. He had purchased property and kept some land in his own hands, but he could not find in his heart to lay out the necessary hire for labourers at the proper season, and consequently he has often been seen in half-dotage working his hay in the month of November by moonlight, a melancholy sight which I myself have witnessed. Notwithstanding all that has been said, this man, on account

of his talents and superior education, was looked up to by his parishioners, who, without a single exception, lived at that time (and most of them upon their own small inheritances) in a state of republican equality, a condition favourable to the growth of kindly feelings among them, and in a striking degree exclusive to temptations to gross vice and scandalous behaviour. As a pastor their curate did little or nothing for them; but what could more strikingly set forth the efficacy of the Church of England through its Ordinances and Liturgy than that, in spite of the unworthiness of the minister, his church was regularly attended; and, though there was not much appearance in his flock of what might be called animated piety, intoxication was rare, and dissolute morals unknown? With the Bible they were for the most part well acquainted; and, as was strikingly shown when they were under affliction, must have been supported and comforted by habitual belief in those truths which it is the aim of the Church to inculcate. — *Loughrigg Tarn.* This beautiful pool and the surrounding scene are minutely described in my little Book on the Lakes. Sir G. H. Beaumont, in the earlier part of his life, was induced, by his love of Nature and the art of painting, to take up his abode at Old Brathay, about three miles from this spot, so that he must have seen it under many aspects; and he was so much pleased with it that he purchased the Tarn with a view to build, near it, such a residence as is alluded to in this Epistle. Baronets and knights were not so common in that day as now, and Sir Michael le Fleming, not liking to have a rival in that kind of distinction so near him, claimed a sort of lordship over the territory, and showed dispositions little in unison with those of Sir G. Beaumont, who was eminently a lover of peace. The project of building was in consequence given up, Sir George retaining possession of the Tarn. Many years afterwards a Kendal tradesman born upon its banks

applied to me for the purchase of it, and accordingly it was sold for the sum that had been given for it, and the money was laid out under my direction upon a substantial oak fence for a certain number of yew trees to be planted in Grasmere churchyard; two were planted in each enclosure, with a view to remove, after a certain time, the one which throve the least. After several years, the stouter plant being left, the others were taken up and placed in other parts of the same churchyard, and were adequately fenced at the expense and under the care of the late Mr. Barber, Mr. Greenwood, and myself: the whole eight are now thriving, and are already an ornament to a place which, during late years, has lost much of its rustic simplicity by the introduction of iron palisades to fence off family burying-grounds, and by numerous monuments, some of them in very bad taste; from which this place of burial was in my memory quite free. See the lines in the sixth book of the "Excursion" beginning — "Green is the churchyard, beautiful and green." The "Epistle" to which these notes refer, though written so far back as 1804, was carefully revised so late as 1842, previous to its publication. I am loth to add, that it was never seen by the person to whom it is addressed. So sensible am I of the deficiencies in all that I write, and so far does everything that I attempt fall short of what I wish it to be, that even private publication, if such a term may be allowed, requires more resolution than I can command. I have written to give vent to my own mind, and not without hope that, some time or other, kindred minds might benefit by my labours: but I am inclined to believe I should never have ventured to send forth any verses of mine to the world if it had not been done on the pressure of personal occasions. Had I been a rich man, my productions, like this "Epistle," the tragedy of the "Borderers," etc., would most likely have been confined to manuscript.

EPISTLE

Far from our home by Grasmere's quiet Lake,
From the Vale's peace which all her fields partake,
Here on the bleakest point of Cumbria's shore
We sojourn stunned by Ocean's ceaseless roar;
While, day by day, grim neighbour! huge Black Comb
Frowns deepening visibly his native gloom,
Unless, perchance rejecting in despite
What on the Plain *we* have of warmth and light,
In his own storms he hides himself from sight.
Rough is the time; and thoughts, that would be free
From heaviness, oft fly, dear Friend, to thee;
Turn from a spot where neither sheltered road
Nor hedge-row screen invites my steps abroad;
Where one poor Plane-tree, having as it might
Attained a stature twice a tall man's height,
Hopeless of further growth, and brown and sere
Through half the summer, stands with top cut sheer,
Like an unshifting weathercock which proves
How cold the quarter that the wind best loves,
Or like a Centinel that, evermore
Darkening the window, ill defends the door
Of this unfinished house — a Fortress bare,
Where strength has been the Builder's only care;
Whose rugged walls may still for years demand
The final polish of the Plasterer's hand.
— This dwelling's Inmate more than three weeks space

Dove Cottage from the Garden

And oft a Prisoner in the cheerless place,
I — of whose touch the fiddle would complain,
Whose breath would labour at the flute in vain,
In music all unversed, nor blessed with skill
A bridge to copy, or to paint a mill,
Tired of my books, a scanty company!
And tired of listening to the boisterous sea —
Pace between door and window muttering rhyme,
An old resource to cheat a froward time!
Though these dull hours (mine is it, or their shame?)
Would tempt me to renounce that humble aim.
— But if there be a Muse who, free to take
Her seat upon Olympus, doth forsake
Those heights (like Phœbus when his golden locks
He veiled, attendant on Thessalian flocks)
And, in disguise, a Milkmaid with her pail
Trips down the pathways of some winding dale;
Or, like a Mermaid, warbles on the shores
To fishers mending nets beside their doors;
Or, Pilgrim-like, on forest moss reclined,
Gives plaintive ditties to the heedless wind,
Or listens to its play among the boughs
Above her head and so forgets her vows —
If such a Visitant of Earth there be
And she would deign this day to smile on me
And aid my verse, content with local bounds

Of natural beauty and life's daily rounds,
Thoughts, chances, sights, or doings, which we tell
Without reserve to those whom we love well —
Then haply, Beaumont! words in current clear
Will flow, and on a welcome page appear
Duly before thy sight, unless they perish here.
What shall I treat of? News from Mona's Isle?
Such have we, but unvaried in its style;
No tales of Runagates fresh landed, whence
And wherefore fugitive or on what pretence;
Of feasts, or scandal, eddying like the wind
Most restlessly alive when most confined.
Ask not of me, whose tongue can best appease
The mighty tumults of the House of Keys;
The last year's cup whose Ram or Heifer gained,
What slopes are planted, or what mosses drained:
An eye of fancy only can I cast
On that proud pageant now at hand or past,
When full five hundred boats in trim array,
With nets and sails outspread and streamers gay,
And chanted hymns and stiller voice of prayer,
For the old Manx-harvest to the Deep repair,
Soon as the herring-shoals at distance shine
Like beds of moonlight shifting on the brine.
Mona from our Abode is daily seen,
But with a wilderness of waves between;

And by conjecture only can we speak
Of aught transacted there in bay or creek;
No tidings reach us thence from town or field,
Only faint news her mountain sunbeams yield,
And some we gather from the misty air,
And some the hovering clouds, our telegraph, declare.
But these poetic mysteries I withhold;
For Fancy hath her fits both hot and cold,
And should the colder fit with You be on
When You might read, my credit would be gone.
Let more substantial themes the pen engage,
And nearer interests culled from the opening stage
Of our migration. — Ere the welcome dawn
Had from the east her silver star withdrawn,
The Wain stood ready, at our Cottage-door,
Thoughtfully freighted with a various store;
And long or ere the uprising of the Sun
O'er dew-damped dust our journey was begun,
A needful journey, under favouring skies,
Through peopled Vales; yet something in the guise
Of those old Patriarchs when from well to well
They roamed through Wastes where now the tented
Arabs dwell.
Say first, to whom did we the charge confide,
Who promptly undertook the Wain to guide
Up many a sharply-twining road and down,

And over many a wide hill's craggy crown,
Through the quick turns of many a hollow nook,
And the rough bed of many an unbridged brook?
A blooming Lass — who in her better hand
Bore a light switch, her sceptre of command
When, yet a slender Girl, she often led,
Skilful and bold, the horse and burthened *sled* [34]
From the peat-yielding Moss on Gowdar's head.
What could go wrong with such a Charioteer
For goods and chattels, or those Infants dear,
A Pair who smilingly sate side by side,
Our hope confirming that the salt-sea tide
Whose free embraces we were bound to seek,
Would their lost strength restore and freshen the
pale cheek?
Such hope did either Parent entertain
Pacing behind along the silent lane.
Blithe hopes and happy musings soon took flight,
For lo! an uncouth melancholy sight —
On a green bank a creature stood forlorn
Just half protruded to the light of morn,
Its hinder part concealed by hedge-row thorn.
The Figure called to mind a beast of prey
Stript of its frightful powers by slow decay,
And, though no longer upon rapine bent,
Dim memory keeping of its old intent.

We started, looked again with anxious eyes,
And in that griesly object recognise
The Curate's Dog — his long-tried friend, for they,
As well we knew, together had grown grey.
The Master died, his drooping servant's grief
Found at the Widow's feet some sad relief;
Yet still he lived in pining discontent,
Sadness which no indulgence could prevent;
Hence whole day wanderings, broken nightly sleeps
And lonesome watch that out of doors he keeps;
Not oftentimes, I trust, as we, poor brute!
Espied him on his legs sustained, blank, mute,
And of all visible motion destitute,
So that the very heaving of his breath
Seemed stopt, though by some other power than death.
Long as we gazed upon the form and face,
A mild domestic pity kept its place,
Unscared by thronging fancies of strange hue
That haunted us in spite of what we knew.
Even now I sometimes think of him as lost
In second-sight appearances, or crost
By spectral shapes of guilt, or to the ground,
On which he stood, by spells unnatural bound,
Like a gaunt shaggy Porter forced to wait
In days of old romance at Archimago's gate.
Advancing Summer, Nature's law fulfilled,

The choristers in every grove had stilled;
But we, we lacked not music of our own,
For lightsome Fanny had thus early thrown,
Mid the gay prattle of those infant tongues,
Some notes prelusive, from the round of songs
With which, more zealous than the liveliest bird
That in wild Arden's brakes was ever heard,
Her work and her work's partners she can cheer,
The whole day long, and all days of the year.

Thus gladdened from our own dear Vale we pass
And soon approach Diana's Looking-glass!
To Loughrigg-tarn, round clear and bright as heaven,
Such name Italian fancy would have given,
Ere on its banks the few grey cabins rose
That yet disturb not its concealed repose
More than the feeblest wind that idly blows.

Ah, Beaumont! when an opening in the road
Stopped me at once by charm of what it showed,
The encircling region vividly exprest
Within the mirror's depth, a world at rest —
Sky streaked with purple, grove and craggy *bield*,[35]
And the smooth green of many a pendent field,
And, quieted and soothed, a torrent small,
A little daring would-be waterfall,
One chimney smoking and its azure wreath,
Associate all in the calm Pool beneath,

With here and there a faint imperfect gleam
Of water-lilies veiled in misty steam —
What wonder at this hour of stillness deep,
A shadowy link 'tween wakefulness and sleep,
When Nature's self, amid such blending, seems
To render visible her own soft dreams,
If, mixed with what appeared of rock, lawn, wood,
Fondly embosomed in the tranquil flood,
A glimpse I caught of that Abode, by Thee
Designed to rise in humble privacy,
A lowly Dwelling, here to be outspread,
Like a small Hamlet, with its bashful head
Half hid in native trees. Alas, 't is not,
Nor ever was; I sighed, and left the spot
Unconscious of its own untoward lot,
And thought in silence, with regret too keen,
Of unexperienced joys that might have been;
Of neighbourhood and intermingling arts,
And golden summer days uniting cheerful hearts.
But time, irrevocable time, is flown.
And let us utter thanks for blessings sown
And reaped — what hath been, and what is, our own.
  Not far we travelled ere a shout of glee,
Startling us all, dispersed my reverie;
Such shout as many a sportive echo meeting
Oft-times from Alpine *chalets* sends a greeting.

Whence the blithe hail? behold a Peasant stand
On high, a kerchief waving in her hand!
Not unexpectant that by early day
Our little Band would thrid this mountain way,
Before her cottage on the bright hillside
She hath advanced with hope to be descried.
Right gladly answering signals we displayed,
Moving along a tract of morning shade,
And vocal wishes sent of like good will
To our kind Friend high on the sunny hill —
Luminous region, fair as if the prime
Were tempting all astir to look aloft or climb;
Only the centre of the shining cot
With door left open makes a gloomy spot,
Emblem of those dark corners sometimes found
Within the happiest breast on earthly ground.
  Rich prospect left behind of stream and vale,
And mountain-tops, a barren ridge we scale;
Descend, and reach, in Yewdale's depths, a plain
With haycocks studded, striped with yellowing grain —
An area level as a Lake and spread
Under a rock too steep for man to tread,
Where sheltered from the north and bleak northwest
Aloft the Raven hangs a visible nest,
Fearless of all assaults that would her brood molest.
Hot sunbeams fill the steaming vale; but hark,

At our approach, a jealous watch-dog's bark,
Noise that brings forth no liveried Page of state,
But the whole household, that our coming wait.
With Young and Old warm greetings we exchange,
And jocund smiles, and toward the lowly Grange
Press forward by the teasing dogs unscared.
Entering, we find the morning meal prepared:
So down we sit, though not till each had cast
Pleased looks around the delicate repast —
Rich cream, and snow-white eggs fresh from the
nest,
With amber honey from the mountain's breast;
Strawberries from lane or woodland, offering wild
Of children's industry, in hillocks piled;
Cakes for the nonce, and butter fit to lie
Upon a lordly dish; frank hospitality
Where simple art with bounteous Nature vied,
And cottage comfort shunned not seemly pride.
Kind Hostess! Handmaid also of the feast,
If thou be lovelier than the kindling East,
Words by thy presence unrestrained may speak
Of a perpetual dawn from brow and cheek
Instinct with light whose sweetest promise lies,
Never retiring, in thy large dark eyes,
Dark but to every gentle feeling true,
As if their lustre flowed from ether's purest blue.

EPISTLE

Let me not ask what tears may have been wept
By those bright eyes, what weary vigils kept,
Beside that hearth what sighs may have been heaved
For wounds inflicted, nor what toil relieved
By fortitude and patience, and the grace
Of heaven in pity visiting the place.
Not unadvisedly those secret springs
I leave unsearched: enough that memory clings,
Here as elsewhere, to notices that make
Their own significance for hearts awake,
To rural incidents, whose genial powers
Filled with delight three summer morning hours.

More could my pen report of grave or gay
That through our gipsy travel cheered the way;
But, bursting forth above the waves, the Sun
Laughs at my pains, and seems to say, "Be done."
Yet, Beaumont, thou wilt not, I trust, reprove
This humble offering made by Truth to Love,
Nor chide the Muse that stooped to break a spell
Which might have else been on me yet: —

FAREWELL.[36]

UPON PERUSING THE FOREGOING EPISTLE THIRTY YEARS AFTER ITS COMPOSITION

1841 1842

Soon did the Almighty Giver of all rest
Take those dear young Ones to a fearless nest;
And in Death's arms has long reposed the Friend
For whom this simple Register was penned.
Thanks to the moth that spared it for our eyes;
And Strangers even the slighted Scroll may prize,
Moved by the touch of kindred sympathies.
For — save the calm, repentance sheds o'er strife
Raised by remembrances of misused life,
The light from past endeavours purely willed
And by Heaven's favour happily fulfilled;
Save hope that we, yet bound to Earth, may share
The joys of the Departed — what so fair
As blameless pleasure, not without some tears,
Reviewed through Love's transparent veil of years?

UPON THE SIGHT OF A BEAUTIFUL PICTURE

PAINTED BY SIR G. H. BEAUMONT, BART.

1811 1815

This was written when we dwelt in the Parsonage at Grasmere. The principal features of the picture are Bredon Hill and Cloud Hill near Coleorton. I shall never forget the happy feeling with which my heart was filled when I was impelled to compose this Sonnet. We resided only two years in this house; and during the last half of the time, which was after this poem had been written, we lost our two children, Thomas and Catharine. Our sorrow upon these events often brought it to my mind, and cast me upon the support to which the last line of it gives expression —

"The appropriate calm of blest eternity."

It is scarcely necessary to add that we still possess the Picture.

Praised be the Art whose subtle power could stay
Yon cloud, and fix it in that glorious shape;
Nor would permit the thin smoke to escape,
Nor those bright sunbeams to forsake the day;
Which stopped that band of travellers on their way,
Ere they were lost within the shady wood;
And showed the Bark upon the glassy flood
For ever anchored in her sheltering bay.

LINES

Soul-soothing Art! whom Morning, Noontide, Even,
Do serve with all their changeful pageantry;
Thou, with ambition modest yet sublime,
Here, for the sight of mortal man, hast given
To one brief moment caught from fleeting time
The appropriate calm of blest eternity.

INSCRIPTIONS

I

IN THE GROUNDS OF COLEORTON, THE SEAT OF SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT, BART., LEICESTERSHIRE

1808 1815

In the grounds of Coleorton these verses are engraved on a stone placed near the Tree, which was thriving and spreading when I saw it in the Summer of 1841.

THE embowering rose, the acacia, and the pine,
Will not unwillingly their place resign;
If but the Cedar thrive that near them stands,
Planted by Beaumont's and by Wordsworth's hands.
One wooed the silent Art with studious pains:
These groves have heard the Other's pensive strains;
Devoted thus, their spirits did unite
By interchange of knowledge and delight.
May Nature's kindliest powers sustain the Tree,
And Love protect it from all injury!
And when its potent branches, wide outthrown,
Darken the brow of this memorial Stone,
Here may some Painter sit in future days,
Some future Poet meditate his lays;
Not mindless of that distant age renowned

When Inspiration hovered o'er this ground,
The haunt of him who sang how spear and shield
In civil conflict met on Bosworth-field;
And of that famous Youth, full soon removed
From earth, perhaps by Shakspeare's self approved,
Fletcher's Associate, Jonson's Friend beloved.

II

IN A GARDEN OF THE SAME

1811 1815

This Niche is in the sandstone-rock in the winter-garden at Coleorton, which garden, as has been elsewhere said, was made under our direction out of an old unsightly quarry. While the labourers were at work, Mrs. Wordsworth, my Sister, and I used to amuse ourselves occasionally in scooping this seat out of the soft stone. It is of the size, with something of the appearance, of a Stall in a Cathedral. This inscription is not engraven, as the former and the two following are, in the grounds.

Oft is the medal faithful to its trust
When temples, columns, towers, are laid in dust;
And 't is a common ordinance of fate
That things obscure and small outlive the great:
Hence, when yon mansion and the flowery trim
Of this fair garden, and its alleys dim,
And all its stately trees, are passed away,
This little Niche, unconscious of decay,

Perchance may still survive. And be it known
That it was scooped within the living stone, —
Not by the sluggish and ungrateful pains
Of labourer plodding for his daily gains,
But by an industry that wrought in love;
With help from female hands, that proudly strove
To aid the work, what time these walks and bowers
Were shaped to cheer dark Winter's lonely hours.

III

WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT, BART., AND IN HIS NAME, FOR AN URN, PLACED BY HIM AT THE TERMINATION OF A NEWLY-PLANTED AVENUE, IN THE SAME GROUNDS

1808 1815

Ye Lime-trees, ranged before this hallowed Urn,
Shoot forth with lively power at Spring's return;
And be not slow a stately growth to rear
Of pillars, branching off from year to year,
Till they have learned to frame a darksome aisle; —
That may recall to mind that awful Pile
Where Reynolds, 'mid our country's noblest dead,
In the last sanctity of fame is laid.
— There, though by right the excelling Painter sleep
Where Death and Glory a joint sabbath keep,

Yet not the less his Spirit would hold dear
Self-hidden praise, and Friendship's private tear:
Hence, on my patrimonial grounds, have I
Raised this frail tribute to his memory;
From youth a zealous follower of the Art
That he professed; attached to him in heart;
Admiring, loving, and with grief and pride
Feeling what England lost when Reynolds died.

IV

FOR A SEAT IN THE GROVES OF COLEORTON

1811 1815

Beneath yon eastern ridge, the craggy bound,
Rugged and high, of Charnwood's forest ground
Stand yet, but, Stranger! hidden from thy view,
The ivied Ruins of forlorn Grace Dieu;
Erst a religious House, which day and night
With hymns resounded, and the chanted rite:
And when those rites had ceased, the Spot gave
birth
To honourable Men of various worth:
There, on the margin of a streamlet wild,
Did Francis Beaumont sport, an eager child;
There, under shadow of the neighbouring rocks,

Sang youthful tales of shepherds and their flocks;
Unconscious prelude to heroic themes,
Heart-breaking tears, and melancholy dreams
Of slighted love, and scorn, and jealous rage,
With which his genius shook the buskined stage.
Communities are lost, and Empires die,
And things of holy use unhallowed lie;
They perish; — but the Intellect can raise,
From airy words alone, a Pile that never decays.

SONG FOR THE SPINNING WHEEL

FOUNDED UPON A BELIEF PREVALENT AMONG THE PASTORAL VALES OF WESTMORELAND

1812 1820

The belief on which this is founded I have often heard expressed by an old neighbour of Grasmere.

Swiftly turn the murmuring wheel!
Night has brought the welcome hour,
When the weary fingers feel
Help, as if from faery power;
Dewy night o'ershades the ground;
Turn the swift wheel round and round!

Now, beneath the starry sky,
Couch the widely-scattered sheep; —
Ply the pleasant labour, ply!
For the spindle, while they sleep,
Runs with speed more smooth and fine,
Gathering up a trustier line.

Short-lived likings may be bred
By a glance from fickle eyes;

But true love is like the thread
Which the kindly wool supplies,
When the flocks are all at rest
Sleeping on the mountain's breast.

COMPOSED ON THE EVE OF THE MARRIAGE OF A FRIEND IN THE VALE OF GRASMERE

1812 1815

What need of clamorous bells, or ribands gay,
These humble nuptials to proclaim or grace?
Angels of love, look down upon the place;
Shed on the chosen vale a sun-bright day!
Yet no proud gladness would the Bride display
Even for such promise: — serious is her face,
Modest her mien; and she, whose thoughts keep pace
With gentleness, in that becoming way
Will thank you. Faultless does the Maid appear;
No disproportion in her soul, no strife:
But, when the closer view of wedded life
Hath shown that nothing human can be clear
From frailty, for that insight may the Wife
To her indulgent Lord become more dear.

WATER-FOWL

OBSERVED FREQUENTLY OVER THE LAKES OF RYDAL AND GRASMERE

1812 1827

"Let me be allowed the aid of verse to describe the evolutions which these visitants sometimes perform, on a fine day towards the close of winter." — *Extract from the Author's Book on the Lakes.*

Mark how the feathered tenants of the flood,
With grace of motion that might scarcely seem
Inferior to angelical, prolong
Their curious pastime! shaping in mid air
(And sometimes with ambitious wing that soars
High as the level of the mountain-tops)
A circuit ampler than the lake beneath —
Their own domain; but ever, while intent
On tracing and retracing that large round,
Their jubilant activity evolves
Hundreds of curves and circlets, to and fro,
Upward and downward, progress intricate
Yet unperplexed, as if one spirit swayed
Their indefatigable flight. 'T is done —
Ten times, or more, I fancied it had ceased;
But lo! the vanished company again

Ascending; they approach — I hear their wings,
Faint, faint at first; and then an eager sound,
Past in a moment — and as faint again!
They tempt the sun to sport amid their plumes;
They tempt the water, or the gleaming ice,
To show them a fair image; 't is themselves,
Their own fair forms, upon the glimmering plain,
Painted more soft and fair as they descend
Almost to touch; — then up again aloft,
Up with a sally and a flash of speed,
As if they scorned both resting-place and rest!

VIEW FROM THE TOP OF BLACK COMB [37]

1813 1815

Mrs. Wordsworth and I, as mentioned in the "Epistle to Sir G. Beaumont," lived some time under its shadow.

This Height a ministering Angel might select:
For from the summit of Black Comb (dread name
Derived from clouds and storms!) the amplest range
Of unobstructed prospect may be seen
That British ground commands: — low dusty tracts,
Where Trent is nursed, far southward! Cambrian hills
To the southwest, a multitudinous show;
And, in a line of eyesight linked with these,
The hoary peaks of Scotland that give birth
To Tiviot's stream, to Annan, Tweed, and Clyde: —
Crowding the quarter whence the sun comes forth
Gigantic mountains rough with crags; beneath,
Right at the imperial station's western base
Main ocean, breaking audibly, and stretched
Far into silent regions blue and pale; —
And visibly engirding Mona's Isle
That, as we left the plain, before our sight
Stood like a lofty mount, uplifting slowly
(Above the convex of the watery globe)

VIEW FROM THE TOP OF BLACK COMB

Into clear view the cultured fields that streak
Her habitable shores, but now appears
A dwindled object, and submits to lie
At the spectator's feet. — Yon azure ridge,
Is it a perishable cloud? Or there
Do we behold the line of Erin's coast?
Land sometimes by the roving shepherd-swain
(Like the bright confines of another world)
Not doubtfully perceived. — Look homeward now!
In depth, in height, in circuit, how serene
The spectacle, how pure! — Of Nature's works,
In earth, and air, and earth-embracing sea,
A revelation infinite it seems;
Display august of man's inheritance,
Of Britain's calm felicity and power!

WRITTEN WITH A SLATE PENCIL ON A STONE, ON THE SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN OF BLACK COMB

1813 1815

The circumstance alluded to at the conclusion of these verses was told me by Dr. Satterthwaite, who was Incumbent of Bootle, a small town at the foot of Black Comb. He had the particulars from one of the engineers who was employed in making trigonometrical surveys of that region.

Stay, bold Adventurer; rest awhile thy limbs
On this commodious Seat! for much remains
Of hard ascent before thou reach the top
Of this huge Eminence, — from blackness named,
And, to far-travelled storms of sea and land,
A favourite spot of tournament and war!
But thee may no such boisterous visitants
Molest; may gentle breezes fan thy brow;
And neither cloud conceal, nor misty air
Bedim, the grand terraqueous spectacle,
From centre to circumference, unveiled!
Know, if thou grudge not to prolong thy rest,
That on the summit whither thou art bound,
A geographic Labourer pitched his tent,
With books supplied and instruments of art,

To measure height and distance; lonely task,
Week after week pursued! — To him was given
Full many a glimpse (but sparingly bestowed
On timid man) of Nature's processes
Upon the exalted hills. He made report
That once, while there he plied his studious work
Within that canvas Dwelling, colours, lines,
And the whole surface of the outspread map,
Became invisible: for all around
Had darkness fallen — unthreatened, unproclaimed —
As if the golden day itself had been
Extinguished in a moment; total gloom,
In which he sate alone, with unclosed eyes,
Upon the blinded mountain's silent top!

NOVEMBER 1813

1813 1815

Now that all hearts are glad, all faces bright,
Our aged Sovereign sits, to the ebb and flow
Of states and kingdoms, to their joy or woe,
Insensible. He sits deprived of sight,
And lamentably wrapt in twofold night,
Whom no weak hopes deceived; whose mind ensued,
Through perilous war, with regal fortitude,
Peace that should claim respect from lawless Might.
Dread King of Kings, vouchsafe a ray divine
To his forlorn condition! let Thy grace
Upon his inner soul in mercy shine;
Permit his heart to kindle, and to embrace
(Though it were only for a moment's space)
The triumphs of this hour; for they are THINE!

LAODAMIA

1814 1815

Written at Rydal Mount. The incident of the trees growing and withering put the subject into my thoughts, and I wrote with the hope of giving it a loftier tone than, so far as I know, has been given to it by any of the Ancients who have treated of it. It cost me more trouble than almost anything of equal length I have ever written.

"With sacrifice before the rising morn
Vows have I made by fruitless hope inspired;
And from the infernal Gods, 'mid shades forlorn
Of night, my slaughtered Lord have I required:
Celestial pity I again implore; —
Restore him to my sight — great Jove, restore!"

So speaking, and by fervent love endowed
With faith, the Suppliant heavenward lifts her hands;
While, like the sun emerging from a cloud,
Her countenance brightens — and her eye expands;
Her bosom heaves and spreads, her stature grows;
And she expects the issue in repose.

O terror! what hath she perceived? — O joy!
What doth she look on? — whom doth she behold?
Her Hero slain upon the beach of Troy?

His vital presence? his corporeal mould?
It is — if sense deceive her not — 't is He!
And a God leads him, wingèd Mercury!

Mild Hermes spake — and touched her with his wand
That calms all fear; "Such grace hath crowned thy prayer,
Laodamía! that at Jove's command
Thy Husband walks the paths of upper air:
He comes to tarry with thee three hours' space;
Accept the gift, behold him face to face!"

Forth sprang the impassioned Queen her Lord to clasp;
Again that consummation she essayed;
But unsubstantial Form eludes her grasp
As often as that eager grasp was made.
The Phantom parts — but parts to reunite,
And reassume his place before her sight.

"Protesiláus, lo! thy guide is gone!
Confirm, I pray, the vision with thy voice:
This is our palace, — yonder is thy throne;
Speak, and the floor thou tread'st on will rejoice.
Not to appal me have the gods bestowed
This precious boon; and blest a sad abode."

"Great Jove, Laodamia! doth not leave
His gifts imperfect: — Spectre though I be,
I am not sent to scare thee or deceive;
But in reward of thy fidelity.
And something also did my worth obtain;
For fearless virtue bringeth boundless gain.

"Thou knowest, the Delphic oracle foretold
That the first Greek who touched the Trojan strand
Should die; but me the threat could not withhold:
A generous cause a victim did demand;
And forth I leapt upon the sandy plain;
A self-devoted chief — by Hector slain."

"Supreme of Heroes — bravest, noblest, best!
Thy matchless courage I bewail no more,
Which then, when tens of thousands were deprest
By doubt, propelled thee to the fatal shore;
Thou found'st — and I forgive thee — here thou art —
A nobler counsellor than my poor heart.

"But thou, though capable of sternest deed,
Wert kind as resolute, and good as brave;
And he, whose power restores thee, hath decreed
Thou should'st elude the malice of the grave:
Redundant are thy locks, thy lips as fair
As when their breath enriched Thessalian air.

"No Spectre greets me, — no vain Shadow this;
Come, blooming Hero, place thee by my side!
Give, on this well-known couch, one nuptial kiss
To me, this day, a second time thy bride!"
Jove frowned in heaven: the conscious Parcæ threw
Upon those roseate lips a Stygian hue.

"This visage tells thee that my doom is past:
Nor should the change be mourned, even if the joys
Of sense were able to return as fast
And surely as they vanish. Earth destroys
Those raptures duly — Erebus disdains:
Calm pleasures there abide — majestic pains.

"Be taught, O faithful Consort, to control
Rebellious passion: for the Gods approve
The depth, and not the tumult, of the soul;
A fervent, not ungovernable, love.
Thy transports moderate; and meekly mourn
When I depart, for brief is my sojourn —"

"Ah, wherefore? — Did not Hercules by force
Wrest from the guardian Monster of the tomb
Alcestis, a reanimated corse,
Given back to dwell on earth in vernal bloom?
Medea's spells dispersed the weight of years,
And Æson stood a youth 'mid youthful peers.

"The Gods to us are merciful -- and they
Yet further may relent: for mightier far
Than strength of nerve and sinew, or the sway
Of magic potent over sun and star,
Is love, though oft to agony distrest,
And though his favourite seat be feeble woman's
breast.

"But if thou goest, I follow —" "Peace!" he said,—
She looked upon him and was calmed and cheered;
The ghastly colour from his lips had fled;
In his deportment, shape, and mien appeared
Elysian beauty, melancholy grace,
Brought from a pensive though a happy place.

He spake of love, such love as Spirits feel
In worlds whose course is equable and pure;
No fears to beat away — no strife to heal —
The past unsighed for, and the future sure;
Spake of heroic arts in graver mood
Revived, with finer harmony pursued;

Of all that is most beauteous — imaged there
In happier beauty; more pellucid streams,
An ampler ether, a diviner air,
And fields invested with purpureal gleams;

Climes which the sun, who sheds the brightest day
Earth knows, is all unworthy to survey.

Yet there the Soul shall enter which hath earned
That privilege by virtue. — "Ill," said he,
"The end of man's existence I discerned,
Who from ignoble games and revelry
Could draw, when we had parted, vain delight,
While tears were thy best pastime, day and night;

"And while my youthful peers before my eyes
(Each hero following his peculiar bent)
Prepared themselves for glorious enterprise
By martial sports, — or, seated in the tent,
Chieftains and kings in council were detained;
What time the fleet at Aulis lay enchained.

"The wished-for wind was given: — I then revolved
The oracle, upon the silent sea;
And, if no worthier led the way, resolved
That, of a thousand vessels, mine should be
The foremost prow in pressing to the strand, —
Mine the first blood that tinged the Trojan sand.

"Yet bitter, oft-times bitter, was the pang
When of thy loss I thought, beloved Wife!

On thee too fondly did my memory hang,
And on the joys we shared in mortal life, —
The paths which we had trod — these fountains, flowers,
My new-planned cities, and unfinished towers.

"But should suspense permit the Foe to cry,
'Behold they tremble! — haughty their array,
Yet of their number no one dares to die?'
In soul I swept the indignity away:
Old frailties then recurred: — but lofty thought,
In act embodied, my deliverance wrought.

"And Thou, though strong in love, art all too weak
In reason, in self-government too slow;
I counsel thee by fortitude to seek
Our blest reunion in the shades below.
The invisible world with thee hath sympathised;
Be thy affections raised and solemnised.

"Learn, by a mortal yearning, to ascend —
Seeking a higher object. Love was given,
Encouraged, sanctioned, chiefly for that end;
For this the passion to excess was driven —
That self might be annulled: her bondage prove
The fetters of a dream, opposed to love." ——

Aloud she shrieked! for Hermes reappears!
Round the dear Shade she would have clung — 't is
vain:
The hours are past — too brief had they been years;
And him no mortal effort can detain:
Swift, toward the realms that know not earthly day,
He through the portal takes his silent way,
And on the palace-floor a lifeless corpse She lay.

Thus, all in vain exhorted and reproved,
She perished; and, as for a wilful crime,
By the just Gods whom no weak pity moved,
Was doomed to wear out her appointed time,
Apart from happy Ghosts, that gather flowers
Of blissful quiet 'mid unfading bowers.

— Yet tears to human suffering are due;
And mortal hopes defeated and o'erthrown
Are mourned by man, and not by man alone,
As fondly he believes. — Upon the side
Of Hellespont (such faith was entertained)
A knot of spiry trees for ages grew [38]
From out the tomb of him for whom she died;
And ever, when such stature they had gained
That Ilium's walls were subject to their view,
The trees' tall summits withered at the sight;
A constant interchange of growth and blight!

DION

(SEE PLUTARCH)

1814 1820

This poem was first introduced by a stanza that I have since transferred to the Notes, for reasons there given, and I cannot comply with the request expressed by some of my friends that the rejected stanza should be restored. I hope they will be content if it be, hereafter, immediately attached to the poem, instead of its being degraded to a place in the Notes.[39]

I

SERENE, and fitted to embrace,
Where'er he turned, a swan-like grace
Of haughtiness without pretence,
And to unfold a still magnificence,
Was princely Dion, in the power
And beauty of his happier hour.
And what pure homage *then* did wait
On Dion's virtues, while the lunar beam
Of Plato's genius, from its lofty sphere,
Fell round him in the grove of Academe,
Softening their inbred dignity austere —
That he, not too elate
With self-sufficing solitude,

But with majestic lowliness endued,
Might in the universal bosom reign,
And from affectionate observance gain
Help, under every change of adverse fate.

II

Five thousand warriors — O the rapturous day!
Each crowned with flowers, and armed with spear
and shield,
Or ruder weapon which their course might yield,
To Syracuse advance in bright array.
Who leads them on? — The anxious people see
Long-exiled Dion marching at their head,
He also crowned with flowers of Sicily,
And in a white, far-beaming corselet clad!
Pure transport undisturbed by doubt or fear
The gazers feel; and, rushing to the plain,
Salute those strangers as a holy train
Or blest procession (to the Immortals dear)
That brought their precious liberty again.
Lo! when the gates are entered, on each hand,
Down the long street, rich goblets filled with wine
In seemly order stand,
On tables set, as if for rites divine; —
And, as the great Deliverer marches by,
He looks on festal ground with fruits bestrown;

And flowers are on his person thrown
In boundless prodigality;
Nor doth the general voice abstain from prayer,
Invoking Dion's tutelary care,
As if a very Deity he were!

III

Mourn, hills and groves of Attica! and mourn
Ilissus, bending o'er thy classic urn!
Mourn, and lament for him whose spirit dreads
Your once sweet memory, studious walks and shades!
For him who to divinity aspired,
Not on the breath of popular applause,
But through dependence on the sacred laws
Framed in the schools where Wisdom dwelt retired,
Intent to trace the ideal path of right
(More fair than heaven's broad causeway paved with stars)
Which Dion learned to measure with sublime delight; —
But He hath overleaped the eternal bars;
And, following guides whose craft holds no consent
With aught that breathes the ethereal element,
Hath stained the robes of civil power with blood,
Unjustly shed, though for the public good.
Whence doubts that came too late, and wishes vain,
Hollow excuses, and triumphant pain;

And oft his cogitations sink as low
As, through the abysses of a joyless heart,
The heaviest plummet of despair can go —
But whence that sudden check? that fearful start!
He hears an uncouth sound —
Anon his lifted eyes
Saw, at a long-drawn gallery's dusky bound,
A Shape of more than mortal size
And hideous aspect, stalking round and round!
A woman's garb the Phantom wore,
And fiercely swept the marble floor, —
Like Auster whirling to and fro,
His force on Caspian foam to try;
Or Boreas when he scours the snow
That skins the plains of Thessaly,
Or when aloft on Mænalus he stops
His flight, 'mid eddying pine-tree tops!

IV

So, but from toil less sign of profit reaping,
The sullen Spectre to her purpose bowed,
Sweeping — vehemently sweeping —
No pause admitted, no design avowed!
"Avaunt, inexplicable Guest! — avaunt,"
Exclaimed the Chieftain — "let me rather see
The coronal that coiling vipers make;

The torch that flames with many a lurid flake,
And the long train of doleful pageantry
Which they behold, whom vengeful Furies haunt;
Who, while they struggle from the scourge to flee,
Move where the blasted soil is not unworn,
And, in their anguish, bear what other minds
have borne!"

V

But Shapes that come not at an earthly call,
Will not depart when mortal voices bid;
Lords of the visionary eye whose lid,
Once raised, remains aghast, and will not fall!
Ye Gods, thought He, that servile Implement
Obeys a mystical intent!
Your Minister would brush away
The spots that to my soul adhere;
But should she labour night and day,
They will not, cannot disappear;
Whence angry perturbations, — and that look
Which no Philosophy can brook!

VI

Ill-fated Chief! there are whose hopes are built
Upon the ruins of thy glorious name;
Who, through the portal of one moment's guilt,
Pursue thee with their deadly aim!

O matchless perfidy! portentous lust
Of monstrous crime! — that horror-striking blade,
Drawn in defiance of the Gods, hath laid
The noble Syracusan low in dust!
Shuddered the walls — the marble city wept —
And sylvan places heaved a pensive sigh;
But in calm peace the appointed Victim slept,
As he had fallen in magnanimity;
Of spirit too capacious to require
That Destiny her course should change; too just
To his own native greatness to desire
That wretched boon, days lengthened by mistrust.
So were the hopeless troubles, that involved
The soul of Dion, instantly dissolved.
Released from life and cares of princely state,
He left this moral grafted on his Fate:
"Him only pleasure leads, and peace attends,
Him, only him, the shield of Jove defends,
Whose means are fair and spotless as his ends."

MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN SCOTLAND

1814

In this tour, my wife and her sister Sara were my companions. The account of the "Brownie's Cell" and the Brownies was given me by a man we met with on the banks of Loch Lomond, a little above Tarbert, and in front of a huge mass of rock, by the side of which, we were told, preachings were often held in the open air. The place is quite a solitude, and the surrounding scenery very striking. How much is it to be regretted that, instead of writing such Poems as the "Holy Fair" and others, in which the religious observances of his country are treated with so much levity and too often with indecency, Burns had not employed his genius in describing religion under the serious and affecting aspects it must so frequently take.

I

SUGGESTED BY A BEAUTIFUL RUIN UPON ONE OF THE ISLANDS OF LOCH LOMOND, A PLACE CHOSEN FOR THE RETREAT OF A SOLITARY INDIVIDUAL, FROM WHOM THIS HABITATION ACQUIRED THE NAME OF

THE BROWNIE'S CELL

1814 1820

I

To barren heath, bleak moor, and quaking fen,
Or depth of labyrinthine glen;
Or into trackless forest set
With trees, whose lofty umbrage met,
World-wearied Men withdrew of yore;
(Penance their trust, and prayer their store;)
And in the wilderness were bound
To such apartments as they found,
Or with a new ambition raised;
That God might suitably be praised.

II

High lodged the *Warrior*, like a bird of prey;
Or where broad waters round him lay:
But this wild Ruin is no ghost
Of his devices — buried, lost!

Within this little lonely isle
There stood a consecrated Pile;
Where tapers burned, and mass was sung,
For them whose timid Spirits clung
To mortal succour, though the tomb
Had fixed, for ever fixed, their doom!

III

Upon those servants of another world
When madding Power her bolts had hurled,
Their habitation shook — it fell,
And perished, save one narrow cell;
Whither, at length, a Wretch retired
Who neither grovelled nor aspired;
He, struggling in the net of pride,
The future scorned, the past defied;
Still tempering, from the unguilty forge
Of vain conceit, an iron scourge!

IV

Proud Remnant was he of a fearless Race,
Who stood and flourished face to face
With their perennial hills; — but Crime,
Hastening the stern decrees of Time,
Brought low a Power, which from its home
Burst, when repose grew wearisome;

And, taking impulse from the sword,
And, mocking its own plighted word,
Had found, in ravage widely dealt,
Its warfare's bourn, its travel's belt!

V

All, all were dispossessed, save him whose smile
Shot lightning through this lonely Isle!
No right had he but what he made
To this small spot, his leafy shade;
But the ground lay within that ring
To which he only dared to cling;
Renouncing here, as worse than dead,
The craven few who bowed the head
Beneath the change; who heard a claim
How loud! yet lived in peace with shame.

VI

From year to year this shaggy Mortal went
(So seemed it) down a strange descent:
Till they, who saw his outward frame,
Fixed on him an unhallowed name;
Him, free from all malicious taint,
And guiding, like the Patmos Saint,
A pen unwearied — to indite,
In his lone Isle, the dreams of night;

Impassioned dreams, that strove to span
The faded glories of his Clan!

VII

Suns that through blood their western harbour sought,
And stars that in their courses fought;
Towers rent, winds combating with woods,
Lands deluged by unbridled floods;
And beast and bird that from the spell
Of sleep took import terrible; —
These types mysterious (if the show
Of battle and the routed foe
Had failed) would furnish an array
Of matter for the dawning day!

VIII

How disappeared He? — ask the newt and toad,
Inheritors of his abode;
The otter crouching undisturbed,
In her dank cleft; — but be thou curbed,
O froward Fancy! 'mid a scene
Of aspect winning and serene;
For those offensive creatures shun
The inquisition of the sun!
And in this region flowers delight,
And all is lovely to the sight.

IX

Spring finds not here a melancholy breast,
When she applies her annual test
To dead and living; when her breath
Quickens, as now, the withered heath; —
Nor flaunting Summer — when he throws
His soul into the briar-rose;
Or calls the lily from her sleep
Prolonged beneath the bordering deep;
Nor Autumn, when the viewless wren
Is warbling near the BROWNIE's Den.

X

Wild Relique! beauteous as the chosen spot
In Nysa's isle, the embellished grot;
Whither, by care of Libyan Jove,
(High Servant of paternal Love)
Young Bacchus was conveyed — to lie
Safe from his step-dame Rhea's eye;
Where bud, and bloom, and fruitage glowed,
Close-crowding round the infant-god;
All colours, — and the liveliest streak
A foil to his celestial cheek!

II

COMPOSED AT CORA LINN

IN SIGHT OF WALLACE'S TOWER

1814 1820

I had seen this celebrated Waterfall twice before; but the feelings, to which it had given birth, were not expressed till they recurred in presence of the object on this occasion.

"— How Wallace fought for Scotland; left the name
Of Wallace to be found, like a wild flower,
All over his dear Country; left the deeds
Of Wallace, like a family of Ghosts,
To people the steep rocks and river banks,
Her natural sanctuaries, with a local soul
Of independence and stern liberty." — Vol. III, p. 13.

Lord of the vale! astounding Flood;
The dullest leaf in this thick wood
Quakes — conscious of thy power;
The caves reply with hollow moan;
And vibrates, to its central stone,
Yon time-cemented Tower!

And yet how fair the rural scene!
For thou, O Clyde, hast ever been
Beneficent as strong;
Pleased in refreshing dews to steep

The little trembling flowers that peep
Thy shelving rocks among.

Hence all who love their country, love
To look on thee — delight to rove
Where they thy voice can hear;
And, to the patriot-warrior's Shade,
Lord of the vale! to Heroes laid
In dust, that voice is dear!

Along thy banks, at dead of night
Sweeps visibly the Wallace Wight;
Or stands, in warlike vest,
Aloft, beneath the moon's pale beam,
A Champion worthy of the stream,
Yon grey tower's living crest!

But clouds and envious darkness hide
A Form not doubtfully descried: —
Their transient mission o'er,
O say to what blind region flee
These Shapes of awful phantasy?
To what untrodden shore?

Less than divine command they spurn;
But this we from the mountains learn,

And this the valleys show;
That never will they deign to hold
Communion where the heart is cold
To human weal and woe.

The man of abject soul in vain
Shall walk the Marathonian plain;
Or thrid the shadowy gloom,
That still invests the guardian Pass,
Where stood, sublime, Leonidas
Devoted to the tomb.

And let no Slave his head incline,
Or kneel, before the votive shrine
By Uri's lake, where Tell
Leapt, from his storm-vext boat, to land,
Heaven's Instrument, for by his hand
That day the Tyrant fell.

III

EFFUSION

IN THE PLEASURE-GROUND ON THE BANKS OF THE BRAN NEAR DUNKELD

1814 1827

I am not aware that this condemnatory effusion was ever seen by the owner of the place. He might be disposed to pay little attention to it; but were it to prove otherwise I should be glad, for the whole exhibition is distressingly puerile.

"The waterfall, by a loud roaring, warned us when we must expect it. We were first, however, conducted into a small apartment, where the Gardener desired us to look at a picture of Ossian, which, while he was telling the history of the young Artist who executed the work, disappeared, parting in the middle — flying asunder as by the touch of magic — and lo! we are at the entrance of a splendid apartment, which was almost dizzy and alive with waterfalls, that tumbled in all directions; the great cascade, opposite the window, which faced us, being reflected in innumerable mirrors upon the ceiling and against the walls." — *Extract from the Journal of my Fellow-Traveller.*

What He — who, 'mid the kindred throng
Of Heroes that inspired his song,
Doth yet frequent the hill of storms,
The stars dim-twinkling through their forms!
What! Ossian here — a painted Thrall,
Mute fixture on a stuccoed wall;

To serve — an unsuspected screen
For show that must not yet be seen;
And, when the moment comes, to part
And vanish by mysterious art;
Head, harp, and body, split asunder,
For ingress to a world of wonder;
A gay saloon, with waters dancing
Upon the sight wherever glancing;
One loud cascade in front, and lo!
A thousand like it, white as snow —
Streams on the walls, and torrent-foam
As active round the hollow dome,
Illusive cataracts! of their terrors
Not stripped, nor voiceless in the mirrors,
That catch the pageant from the flood
Thundering adown a rocky wood.
What pains to dazzle and confound!
What strife of colour, shape and sound
In this quaint medley, that might seem
Devised out of a sick man's dream!
Strange scene, fantastic and uneasy
As ever made a maniac dizzy,
When disenchanted from the mood
That loves on sullen thoughts to brood!
O Nature — in thy changeful visions,
Through all thy most abrupt transitions

Smooth, graceful, tender, or sublime —
Ever averse to pantomime,
Thee neither do they know nor us
Thy servants, who can trifle thus;
Else verily the sober powers
Of rock that frowns, and stream that roars,
Exalted by congenial sway
Of Spirits, and the undying Lay,
And Names that moulder not away,
Had wakened some redeeming thought
More worthy of this favoured Spot;
Recalled some feeling — to set free
The Bard from such indignity!
The Effigies of a valiant Wight
I once beheld, a Templar Knight;[40]
Not prostrate, not like those that rest
On tombs, with palms together prest,
But sculptured out of living stone,
And standing upright and alone,
Both hands with rival energy
Employed in setting his sword free
From its dull sheath — stern sentinel
Intent to guard St. Robert's cell;
As if with memory of the affray
Far distant, when, as legends say,
The Monks of Fountain's thronged to force

From its dear home the Hermit's corse,
That in their keeping it might lie,
To crown their abbey's sanctity.
So had they rushed into the grot
Of sense despised, a world forgot,
And torn him from his loved retreat,
Where altar-stone and rock-hewn seat
Still hint that quiet best is found,
Even by the *Living*, under ground;
But a bold Knight, the selfish aim
Defeating, put the monks to shame,
There where you see his Image stand
Bare to the sky, with threatening brand
Which lingering Nid is proud to show
Reflected in the pool below.
  Thus, like the men of earliest days,
Our sires set forth their grateful praise:
Uncouth the workmanship, and rude!
But, nursed in mountain solitude,
Might some aspiring artist dare
To seize whate'er, through misty air,
A ghost, by glimpses, may present
Of imitable lineament,
And give the phantom an array
That less should scorn the abandoned clay;
Then let him hew with patient stroke

An Ossian out of mural rock,
And leave the figurative Man —
Upon thy margin, roaring Bran! —
Fixed, like the Templar of the steep,
An everlasting watch to keep;
With local sanctities in trust,
More precious than a hermit's dust;
And virtues through the mass infused,
Which old idolatry abused.

What though the Granite would deny
All fervour to the sightless eye;
And touch from rising suns in vain
Solicit a Memnonian strain;
Yet, in some fit of anger sharp,
The wind might force the deep-grooved harp
To utter melancholy moans
Not unconnected with the tones
Of soul-sick flesh and weary bones;
While grove and river notes would lend,
Less deeply sad, with these to blend!

Vain pleasures of luxurious life,
For ever with yourselves at strife;
Through town and country both deranged
By affectations interchanged,
And all the perishable gauds
That heaven-deserted man applauds;

EFFUSION

When will your hapless patrons learn
To watch and ponder — to discern
The freshness, the everlasting youth,
Of admiration sprung from truth;
From beauty infinitely growing
Upon a mind with love o'erflowing —
To sound the depths of every Art
That seeks its wisdom through the heart?
  Thus (where the intrusive Pile, ill-graced
With baubles of theatric taste,
O'erlooks the torrent breathing showers
On motley banks of alien flowers
In stiff confusion set or sown,
Till Nature cannot find her own,
Or keep a remnant of the sod
Which Caledonian Heroes trod)
I mused; and, thirsting for redress,
Recoiled into the wilderness.

IV

YARROW VISITED

SEPTEMBER 1814

1814 1815

As mentioned in my verses on the death of the Ettrick Shepherd, my first visit to Yarrow was in his company. We had lodged the night before at Traquhair, where Hogg had joined us and also Dr. Anderson, the Editor of the British Poets, who was on a visit at the Manse. Dr. A. walked with us till we came in view of the Vale of Yarrow, and, being advanced in life, he then turned back. The old Man was passionately fond of poetry, though with not much of a discriminating judgment, as the Volumes he edited sufficiently show. But I was much pleased to meet with him, and to acknowledge my obligation to his collection, which had been my brother John's companion in more than one voyage to India, and which he gave me before his departure from Grasmere, never to return. Through these Volumes I became first familiar with Chaucer, and so little money had I then to spare for books, that, in all probability, but for this same work, I should have known little of Drayton, Daniel, and other distinguished poets of the Elizabethan age, and their immediate successors, till a much later period of my life. I am glad to record this, not from any importance of its own, but as a tribute of gratitude to this simple-hearted old man, whom I never again had the pleasure of meeting. I seldom read or think of this poem without regretting that my dear Sister was not of the party, as she would have had so much delight in recalling the time when, travelling together in

YARROW VISITED

Scotland, we declined going in search of this celebrated stream, not altogether, I will frankly confess, for the reasons assigned in the poem on the occasion.

And is this — Yarrow? — *This* the Stream
Of which my fancy cherished,
So faithfully, a waking dream?
An image that hath perished!
O that some Minstrel's harp were near,
To utter notes of gladness,
And chase this silence from the air,
That fills my heart with sadness!

Yet why? — a silvery current flows
With uncontrolled meanderings;
Nor have these eyes by greener hills
Been soothed, in all my wanderings.
And, through her depths, Saint Mary's Lake
Is visibly delighted;
For not a feature of those hills
Is in the mirror slighted.

A blue sky bends o'er Yarrow Vale,
Save where that pearly whiteness
Is round the rising sun diffused,
A tender hazy brightness;
Mild dawn of promise! that excludes
All profitless dejection;

Though not unwilling here to admit
A pensive recollection.

Where was it that the famous Flower
Of Yarrow Vale lay bleeding?
His bed perchance was yon smooth mound
On which the herd is feeding:
And haply from this crystal pool,
Now peaceful as the morning,
The Water-wraith ascended thrice —
And gave his doleful warning.

Delicious is the Lay that sings
The haunts of happy Lovers,
The path that leads them to the grove,
The leafy grove that covers:
And Pity sanctifies the Verse
That paints, by strength of sorrow,
The unconquerable strength of love;
Bear witness, rueful Yarrow!

But thou, that didst appear so fair
To fond imagination,
Dost rival in the light of day
Her delicate creation:
Meek loveliness is round thee spread,
A softness still and holy;

The grace of forest charms decayed,
And pastoral melancholy.

That region left, the vale unfolds
Rich groves of lofty stature,
With Yarrow winding through the pomp
Of cultivated Nature;
And, rising from those lofty groves,
Behold a Ruin hoary!
The shattered front of Newark's Towers,
Renowned in Border story.

Fair scenes for childhood's opening bloom,
For sportive youth to stray in;
For manhood to enjoy his strength;
And age to wear away in!
Yon cottage seems a bower of bliss,
A covert for protection
Of tender thoughts, that nestle there —
The brood of chaste affection.

How sweet, on this autumnal day,
The wild-wood fruits to gather,
And on my True-love's forehead plant
A crest of blooming heather!
And what if I enwreathed my own!
'T were no offence to reason;

The sober Hills thus deck their brows
To meet the wintry season.

I see — but not by sight alone,
Loved Yarrow, have I won thee;
A ray of fancy still survives —
Her sunshine plays upon thee!
Thy ever-youthful waters keep
A course of lively pleasure;
And gladsome notes my lips can breathe,
Accordant to the measure.

The vapours linger round the Heights,
They melt, and soon must vanish;
One hour is theirs, nor more is mine —
Sad thought which I would banish,
But that I know, where'er I go,
Thy genuine image, Yarrow!
Will dwell with me — to heighten joy,
And cheer my mind in sorrow.

"FROM THE DARK CHAMBERS OF DEJECTION FREED"

1814 1815

Composed in Edinburgh, during my Scotch tour with Mrs. Wordsworth and my sister Miss Hutchinson, in the year 1814. Poor Gillies never rose above that course of extravagance in which he was at that time living, and which soon reduced him to poverty and all its degrading shifts, mendicity being far from the worst. I grieve whenever I think of him, for he was far from being without genius, and had a generous heart, not always to be found in men given up to profusion. He was nephew of Lord Gillies the Scotch judge, and also of the historian of Greece. He was cousin to Miss Margaret Gillies, who painted so many portraits with success in our house.

FROM the dark chambers of dejection freed,
Spurning the unprofitable yoke of care,
Rise, GILLIES, rise; the gales of youth shall bear
Thy genius forward like a wingèd steed.
Though bold Bellerophon (so Jove decreed
In wrath) fell headlong from the fields of air,
Yet a rich guerdon waits on minds that dare,
If aught be in them of immortal seed,
And reason govern that audacious flight
Which heavenward they direct. — Then droop not thou,

Erroneously renewing a sad vow
In the low dell 'mid Roslin's faded grove:
A cheerful life is what the Muses love,
A soaring spirit is their prime delight.

LINES

WRITTEN ON A BLANK LEAF IN A COPY OF THE AUTHOR'S POEM "THE EXCURSION," UPON HEARING OF THE DEATH OF THE LATE VICAR OF KENDAL

1814 1815

To public notice, with reluctance strong,
Did I deliver this unfinished Song;
Yet for one happy issue; — and I look
With self-congratulation on the Book
Which pious, learned MURFITT saw and read; —
Upon my thoughts his saintly Spirit fed;
He conned the new-born Lay with grateful heart —
Foreboding not how soon he must depart;
Unweeting that to him the joy was given
Which good men take with them from earth to heaven.

TO B. R. HAYDON

1815 1816

High is our calling, Friend! — Creative Art
(Whether the instrument of words she use,
Or pencil pregnant with ethereal hues,)
Demands the service of a mind and heart,
Though sensitive, yet, in their weakest part,
Heroically fashioned — to infuse
Faith in the whispers of the lonely Muse,
While the whole world seems adverse to desert.
And, oh! when Nature sinks, as oft she may,
Through long-lived pressure of obscure distress,
Still to be strenuous for the bright reward,
And in the soul admit of no decay,
Brook no continuance of weak-mindedness —
Great is the glory, for the strife is hard!

ARTEGAL AND ELIDURE

1815 1820

(SEE THE CHRONICLE OF GEOFFREY OF MONMOUTH AND MILTON'S HISTORY OF ENGLAND)

This was written at Rydal Mount, as a token of affectionate respect for the memory of Milton. "I have determined," says he, in his preface to his *History of England*, "to bestow the telling over even of these reputed tales, be it for nothing else but in favour of our English Poets and Rhetoricians, who by their wit will know how to use them judiciously."

WHERE be the temples which, in Britain's Isle,
For his paternal Gods, the Trojan raised?
Gone like a morning dream, or like a pile
Of clouds that in cerulean ether blazed!
Ere Julius landed on her white-cliffed shore,
They sank, delivered o'er
To fatal dissolution; and, I ween,
No vestige then was left that such had ever been.

Nathless, a British record (long concealed
In old Armorica, whose secret springs
No Gothic conqueror ever drank) revealed
The marvellous current of forgotten things;

How Brutus came, by oracles impelled,
And Albion's giants quelled,
A brood whom no civility could melt,
"Who never tasted grace, and goodness ne'er had felt."

By brave Corineus aided, he subdued,
And rooted out the intolerable kind;
And this too-long-polluted land imbued
With goodly arts and usages refined;
Whence golden harvests, cities, warlike towers,
And pleasure's sumptuous bowers;
Whence all the fixed delights of house and home,
Friendships that will not break, and love that cannot roam.

O, happy Britain! region all too fair
For self-delighting fancy to endure
That silence only should inhabit there,
Wild beasts, or uncouth savages impure!
But, intermingled with the generous seed,
Grew many a poisonous weed;
Thus fares it still with all that takes its birth
From human care, or grows upon the breast of earth.

Hence, and how soon! that war of vengeance waged
By Guendolen against her faithless lord;

Till she, in jealous fury unassuaged
Had slain his paramour with ruthless sword:
Then, into Severn hideously defiled,
She flung her blameless child,
Sabrina, — vowing that the stream should bear
That name through every age, her hatred to declare.

So speaks the Chronicle, and tells of Lear
By his ungrateful daughters turned adrift.
Ye lightnings, hear his voice! — they cannot hear,
Nor can the winds restore his simple gift.
But One there is, a Child of nature meek,
Who comes her Sire to seek;
And he, recovering sense, upon her breast
Leans smilingly, and sinks into a perfect rest.

There too we read of Spenser's fairy themes,
And those that Milton loved in youthful years;
The sage enchanter Merlin's subtle schemes;
The feats of Arthur and his knightly peers;
Of Arthur, — who, to upper light restored,
With that terrific sword
Which yet he brandishes for future war,
Shall lift his country's fame above the polar star!

What wonder, then, if in such ample field
Of old tradition, one particular flower

Doth seemingly in vain its fragrance yield,
And bloom unnoticed even to this late hour?
Now, gentle Muses, your assistance grant,
While I this flower transplant
Into a garden stored with Poesy;
Where flowers and herbs unite, and haply some weeds be,
That, wanting not wild grace, are from all mischief free!

A King more worthy of respect and love
Than wise Gorbonian ruled not in his day;
And grateful Britain prospered far above
All neighbouring countries through his righteous sway;
He poured rewards and honours on the good;
The oppressor he withstood:
And while he served the Gods with reverence due
Fields smiled, and temples rose, and towns and cities grew.

He died, whom Artegal succeeds — his son;
But how unworthy of that sire was he!
A hopeful reign, auspiciously begun,
Was darkened soon by foul iniquity.
From crime to crime he mounted, till at length
The nobles leagued their strength

With a vexed people, and the tyrant chased;
And, on the vacant throne, his worthier Brother
placed.

From realm to realm the humbled Exile went,
Suppliant for aid his kingdom to regain;
In many a court, and many a warrior's tent,
He urged his persevering suit in vain.
Him, in whose wretched heart ambition failed,
Dire poverty assailed;
And, tired with slights his pride no more could brook,
He towards his native country cast a longing look.

Fair blew the wished-for wind — the voyage sped;
He landed; and, by many dangers scared,
"Poorly provided, poorly followed,"
To Calaterium's forest he repaired.
How changed from him who, born to highest place,
Had swayed the royal mace,
Flattered and feared, despised yet deified,
In Troynovant, his seat by silver Thames's side!

From that wild region where the crownless King
Lay in concealment with his scanty train,
Supporting life by water from the spring,
And such chance food as outlaws can obtain,

Unto the few whom he esteems his friends
A messenger he sends;
And from their secret loyalty requires
Shelter and daily bread, — the sum of his desires.

While he the issue waits, at early morn
Wandering by stealth abroad, he chanced to hear
A startling outcry made by hound and horn,
From which the tusky wild boar flies in fear;
And, scouring toward him o'er the grassy plain,
Behold the hunter train!
He bids his little company advance
With seeming unconcern and steady countenance.

The royal Elidure, who leads the chase,
Hath checked his foaming courser: — can it be!
Methinks that I should recognise that face,
Though much disguised by long adversity!
He gazed rejoicing, and again he gazed,
Confounded and amazed —
"It is the king, my brother!" and, by sound
Of his own voice confirmed, he leaps upon the ground.

Long, strict, and tender was the embrace he gave,
Feebly returned by daunted Artegal;
Whose natural affection doubts enslave,

And apprehensions dark and criminal.
Loth to restrain the moving interview,
The attendant lords withdrew;
And, while they stood upon the plain apart,
Thus Elidure, by words, relieved his struggling heart.

"By heavenly Powers conducted, we have met;
— O Brother! to my knowledge lost so long,
But neither lost to love, nor to regret,
Nor to my wishes lost; — forgive the wrong,
(Such it may seem) if I thy crown have borne,
Thy royal mantle worn:
I was their natural guardian; and 't is just
That now I should restore what hath been held in trust."

A while the astonished Artegal stood mute,
Then thus exclaimed: "To me, of titles shorn,
And stripped of power! me, feeble, destitute,
To me a kingdom! spare the bitter scorn:
If justice ruled the breast of foreign kings,
Then, on the widespread wings
Of war, had I returned to claim my right;
This will I here avow, not dreading thy despite."

"I do not blame thee," Elidure replied;
"But, if my looks did with my words agree,

I should at once be trusted, not defied,
And thou from all disquietude be free.
May the unsullied Goddess of the chase,
Who to this blessèd place
At this blest moment led me, if I speak
With insincere intent, on me her vengeance wreak!

"Were this same spear, which in my hand I grasp,
The British sceptre, here would I to thee
The symbol yield; and would undo this clasp,
If it confined the robe of sovereignty.
Odious to me the pomp of regal court,
And joyless sylvan sport,
While thou art roving, wretched and forlorn,
Thy couch the dewy earth, thy roof the forest thorn!"

Then Artegal thus spake: "I only sought,
Within this realm a place of safe retreat;
Beware of rousing an ambitious thought;
Beware of kindling hopes, for me unmeet!
Thou art reputed wise, but in my mind
Art pitiably blind:
Full soon this generous purpose thou may'st rue,
When that which has been done no wishes can undo.

"Who, when a crown is fixed upon his head,
Would balance claim with claim, and right with right?

But thou — I know not how inspired, how led —
Wouldst change the course of things in all men's sight!
And this for one who cannot imitate
Thy virtue, who may hate:
For, if, by such strange sacrifice restored,
He reign, thou still must be his king, and sovereign lord;

"Lifted in magnanimity above
Aught that my feeble nature could perform,
Or even conceive; surpassing me in love
Far as in power the eagle doth the worm.
I, Brother! only should be king in name,
And govern to my shame;
A shadow in a hated land, while all
Of glad or willing service to thy share would fall."

"Believe it not," said Elidure; "respect
Awaits on virtuous life, and ever most
Attends on goodness with dominion decked,
Which stands the universal empire's boast;
This can thy own experience testify:
Nor shall thy foes deny
That, in the gracious opening of thy reign,
Our father's spirit seemed in thee to breathe again.

"And what if o'er thy bright unbosoming
Clouds of disgrace and envious fortune past!
Have we not seen the glories of the spring
By veil of noontide darkness overcast?
The frith that glittered like a warrior's shield,
The sky, the gay green field,
Are vanished; gladness ceases in the groves,
And trepidation strikes the blackened mountain-coves.

"But is that gloom dissolved? how passing clear
Seems the wide world, far brighter than before!
Even so thy latent worth will reappear,
Gladdening the people's heart from shore to shore;
For youthful faults ripe virtues shall atone;
Reseated on thy throne,
Proof shalt thou furnish that misfortune, pain,
And sorrow, have confirmed thy native right to reign.

"But, not to overlook what thou may'st know,
Thy enemies are neither weak nor few;
And circumspect must be our course, and slow,
Or from my purpose ruin may ensue.'
Dismiss thy followers; — let them calmly wait
Such change in thy estate
As I already have in thought devised;
And which, with caution due, may soon be realised."

The Story tells what courses were pursued,
Until King Elidure, with full consent
Of all his peers, before the multitude,
Rose, — and, to consummate this just intent,
Did place upon his brother's head the crown,
Relinquished by his own;
Then to his people cried, "Receive your lord,
Gorbonian's first-born son, your rightful king
restored!"

The people answered with a loud acclaim:
Yet more; — heart-smitten by the heroic deed,
The reinstated Artegal became
Earth's noblest penitent; from bondage freed
Of vice — thenceforth unable to subvert
Or shake his high desert.
Long did he reign; and, when he died, the tear
Of universal grief bedewed his honoured bier.

Thus was a Brother by a Brother saved;
With whom a crown (temptation that hath set
Discord in hearts of men till they have braved
Their nearest kin with deadly purpose met)
'Gainst duty weighed, and faithful love, did seem
A thing of no esteem;
And, from this triumph of affection pure,
He bore the lasting name of "pious Elidure."

SEPTEMBER 1815

1815 1816

"For me who under kindlier laws." This conclusion has more than once, to my great regret, excited painfully sad feelings in the hearts of young persons fond of poetry and poetic composition, by contrast of their feeble and declining health with that state of robust constitution which prompted me to rejoice in a season of frost and snow as more favourable to the Muses than Summer itself.

While not a leaf seems faded; while the fields,
With ripening harvest prodigally fair,
In brightest sunshine bask; this nipping air,
Sent from some distant clime where Winter wields
His icy scimitar, a foretaste yields
Of bitter change, and bids the flowers beware;
And whispers to the silent birds, "Prepare
Against the threatening foe your trustiest shields."
For me, who under kindlier laws belong
To Nature's tuneful quire, this rustling dry
Through leaves yet green, and yon crystalline sky,
Announce a season potent to renew,
'Mid frost and snow, the instinctive joys of song,
And nobler cares than listless Summer knew.

Langdale River and Pikes

NOVEMBER 1

1815 1816

Suggested on the banks of the Brathay by the sight of Langdale Pikes. It is delightful to remember these moments of far-distant days, which probably would have been forgotten if the impression had not been transferred to verse. The same observation applies to the next.

How clear, how keen, how marvellously bright
The effluence from yon distant mountain's head,
Which, strewn with snow smooth as the sky can shed,
Shines like another sun — on mortal sight
Uprisen, as if to check approaching Night,
And all her twinkling stars. Who now would tread,
If so he might, yon mountain's glittering head —
Terrestrial, but a surface, by the flight
Of sad mortality's earth-sullying wing,
Unswept, unstained? Nor shall the aerial Powers
Dissolve that beauty, destined to endure,
White, radiant, spotless, exquisitely pure,
Through all vicissitudes, till genial Spring
Has filled the laughing vales with welcome flowers.

"THE FAIREST, BRIGHTEST, HUES OF ETHER FADE"

1810–15 1815

Suggested at Hacket, which is on the craggy ridge that rises between the two Langdales and looks towards Windermere. The Cottage of Hacket was often visited by us, and at the time when this Sonnet was written, and long after, was occupied by the husband and wife described in the "Excursion," where it is mentioned that she was in the habit of walking in the front of the dwelling with a light to guide her husband home at night. The same cottage is alluded to in the "Epistle to Sir George Beaumont" as that from which the female peasant hailed us on our morning journey. The musician mentioned in the Sonnet was the Rev. Samuel Tillbrook of Peter-house, Cambridge, who remodelled the Ivy Cottage at Rydal after he had purchased it.

THE fairest, brightest hues of ether fade;
The sweetest notes must terminate and die;
O Friend! thy flute has breathed a harmony
Softly resounded through this rocky glade;
Such strains of rapture as the Genius played
In his still haunt on Bagdad's summit high;[41]
He who stood visible to Mirza's eye,
Never before to human sight betrayed.
Lo, in the vale, the mists of evening spread!
The visionary Arches are not there,

Nor the green Islands, nor the shining Seas:
Yet sacred is to me this Mountain's head,
Whence I have risen, uplifted, on the breeze
Of harmony, above all earthly care.

"WEAK IS THE WILL OF MAN, HIS JUDGMENT BLIND"

1810–15 1815

"Weak is the will of Man, his judgment blind;
Remembrance persecutes, and Hope betrays;
Heavy is woe; — and joy, for human-kind,
A mournful thing, so transient is the blaze!"
Thus might *he* paint our lot of mortal days
Who wants the glorious faculty assigned
To elevate the more-than-reasoning Mind,
And colour life's dark cloud with orient rays.
Imagination is that sacred power,
Imagination lofty and refined;
'T is hers to pluck the amaranthine flower
Of Faith, and round the Sufferer's temples bind
Wreaths that endure affliction's heaviest shower,
And do not shrink from sorrow's keenest wind.

"HAIL, TWILIGHT, SOVEREIGN OF ONE PEACEFUL HOUR"

1810–15 1815

HAIL, Twilight, sovereign of one peaceful hour!
Not dull art Thou as undiscerning Night;
But studious only to remove from sight
Day's mutable distinctions. — Ancient Power!
Thus did the waters gleam, the mountains lower,
To the rude Briton, when, in wolf-skin vest
Here roving wild, he laid him down to rest
On the bare rock, or through a leafy bower
Looked ere his eyes were closed. By him was seen
The selfsame Vision which we now behold,
At thy meek bidding, shadowy Power! brought forth
These mighty barriers, and the gulf between;
The flood, the stars, — a spectacle as old
As the beginning of the heavens and earth!

"THE SHEPHERD, LOOKING EASTWARD, SOFTLY SAID"

1810–15 1815

The Shepherd, looking eastward, softly said,
"Bright is thy veil, O Moon, as thou art bright!"
Forthwith, that little cloud, in ether spread
And penetrated all with tender light,
She cast away, and showed her fulgent head
Uncovered; dazzling the Beholder's sight
As if to vindicate her beauty's right
Her beauty thoughtlessly disparagèd.
Meanwhile that veil, removed or thrown aside,
Went floating from her, darkening as it went;
And a huge mass, to bury or to hide,
Approached this glory of the firmament;
Who meekly yields, and is obscured — content
With one calm triumph of a modest pride.

"EVEN AS A DRAGON'S EYE THAT FEELS THE STRESS"

1810–15 1815

Even as a dragon's eye that feels the stress
Of a bedimming sleep, or as a lamp
Suddenly glaring through sepulchral damp,
So burns yon Taper 'mid a black recess
Of mountains, silent, dreary, motionless:
The lake below reflects it not; the sky,
Muffled in clouds, affords no company
To mitigate and cheer its loneliness.
Yet, round the body of that joyless Thing
Which sends so far its melancholy light,
Perhaps are seated in domestic ring
A gay society with faces bright,
Conversing, reading, laughing; — or they sing,
While hearts and voices in the song unite.

"MARK THE CONCENTRED HAZELS THAT ENCLOSE"

1810–15 1815

Suggested in the wild hazel wood at the foot of Helm-crag, where the stone still lies, with others of like form and character, though much of the wood that veiled it from the glare of day has been felled. This beautiful ground was lately purchased by our friend Mrs. Fletcher, the ancient owners, most respected persons, being obliged to part with it in consequence of the imprudence of a son. It is gratifying to mention that, instead of murmuring and repining at this change of fortune, they offered their services to Mrs. Fletcher, the husband as an outdoor labourer, and the wife as a domestic servant. I have witnessed the pride and pleasure with which the man worked at improvements of the ground round the house. Indeed he expressed those feelings to me himself, and the countenance and manner of his wife always denoted feelings of the same character. I believe a similar disposition to contentment under change of fortune is common among the class to which these good people belong. Yet, in proof that to part with their patrimony is most painful to them, I may refer to those stanzas entitled "Repentance," no inconsiderable part of which was taken verbatim from the language of the speaker herself.

Mark the concentred hazels that enclose
Yon old gray Stone, protected from the ray
Of noontide suns: — and even the beams that play
And glance, while wantonly the rough wind blows,

Are seldom free to touch the moss that grows
Upon that roof, amid embowering gloom,
The very image framing of a Tomb,
In which some ancient Chieftain finds repose
Among the lonely mountains. — Live, ye trees!
And thou, grey Stone, the pensive likeness keep
Of a dark chamber where the Mighty sleep:
For more than Fancy to the influence bends
When solitary Nature condescends
To mimic Time's forlorn humanities.

TO THE POET, JOHN DYER

1810–15 1815

Bard of the Fleece, whose skilful genius made
That work a living landscape fair and bright;
Nor hallowed less with musical delight
Than those soft scenes through which thy childhood strayed,
Those southern tracts of Cambria, "deep embayed,
With green hills fenced, with ocean's murmur lulled";
Though hasty Fame hath many a chaplet culled
For worthless brows, while in the pensive shade
Of cold neglect she leaves thy head ungraced,
Yet pure and powerful minds, hearts meek and still,
A grateful few, shall love thy modest Lay,
Long as the shepherd's bleating flock shall stray
O'er naked Snowdon's wide aërial waste;
Long as the thrush shall pipe on Grongar Hill!

"BROOK! WHOSE SOCIETY THE POET SEEKS"

1810–15 1815

Brook! whose society the Poet seeks,
Intent his wasted spirits to renew;
And whom the curious Painter doth pursue
Through rocky passes, among flowery creeks,
And tracks thee dancing down thy water-breaks;
If wish were mine some type of thee to view,
Thee, and not thee thyself, I would not do
Like Grecian Artists, give the human cheeks,
Channels for tears; no Naiad should'st thou be, —
Have neither limbs, feet, feathers, joints nor hairs
It seems the Eternal Soul is clothed in thee
With purer robes than those of flesh and blood,
And hath bestowed on thee a safer good;
Unwearied joy, and life without its cares.

"SURPRISED BY JOY — IMPATIENT AS THE WIND"

1810–15 1815

This was in fact suggested by my daughter Catharine long after her death.

SURPRISED by joy — impatient as the Wind
I turned to share the transport — Oh! with whom
But Thee, deep buried in the silent tomb,
That spot which no vicissitude can find?
Love, faithful love, recalled thee to my mind —
But how could I forget thee? Through what power,
Even for the least division of an hour,
Have I been so beguiled as to be blind
To my most grievous loss? — That thought's return
Was the worst pang that sorrow ever bore,
Save one, one only, when I stood forlorn,
Knowing my heart's best treasure was no more;
That neither present time, nor years unborn
Could to my sight that heavenly face restore.

END OF VOLUME V

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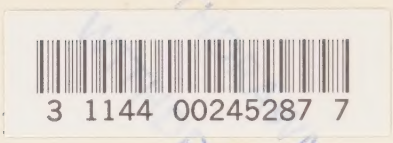
WITHDRAWN



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